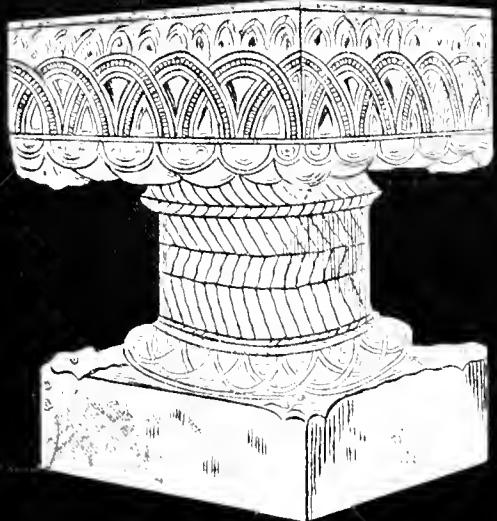
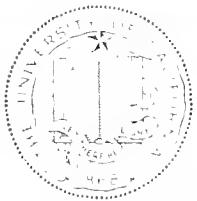


NORTH DEVON CHURCHES

STUDIES OF SOME OF THE ANCIENT BUILDINGS



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY
ALLEN T. HUSSELL. F.R.I.B.A.



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The Sedilia.
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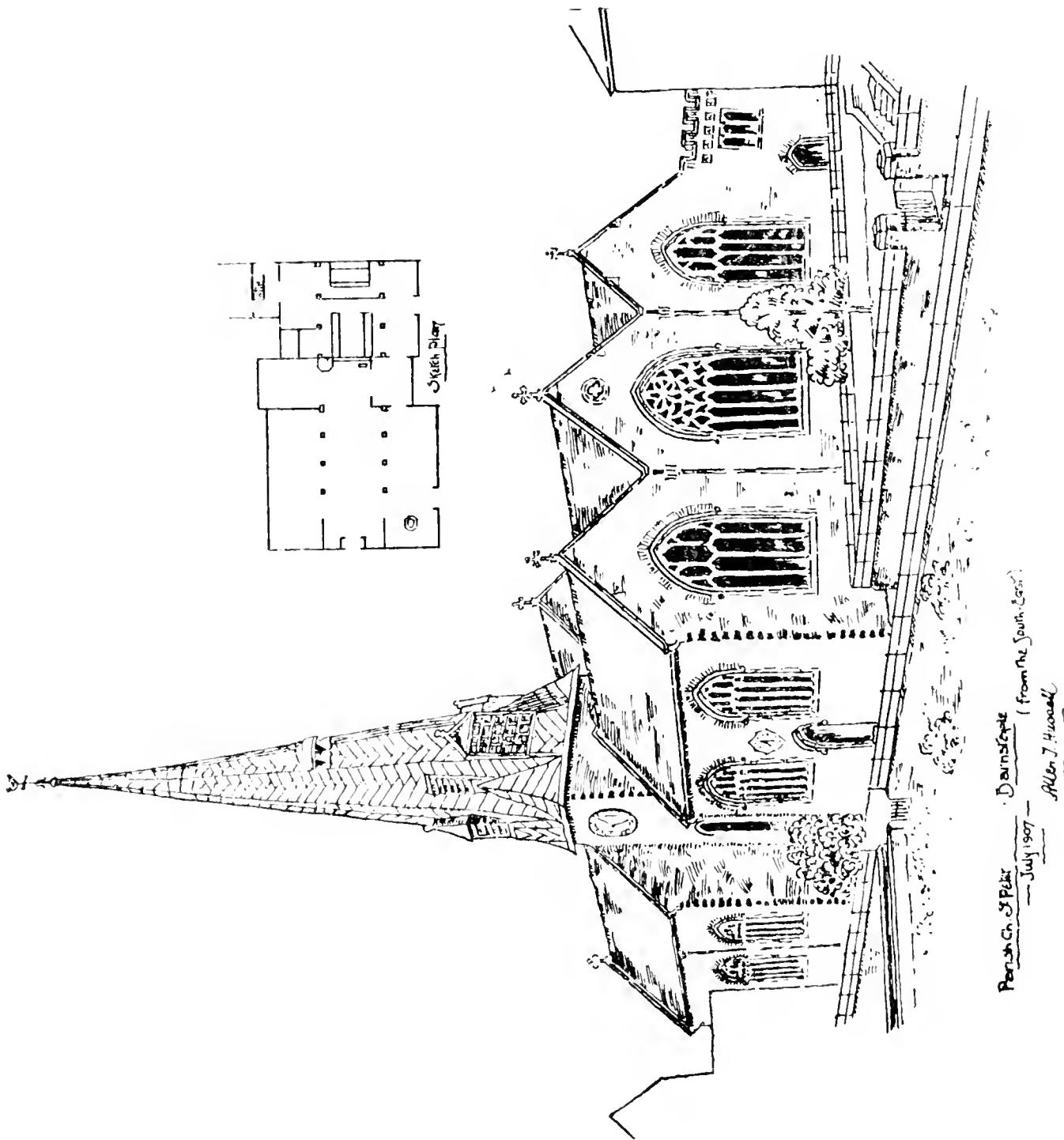
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NORTH
—
DEVON
CHURCHES.

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SOME OF THE
ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

BY
ALLEN T. HUSSELL, F.R.I.B.A.
W

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PREFACES.



Of many books concerning North Devon have been issued from the press during recent years that it might well have been pronounced impossible to produce another that should be in any way original, attractive, and interesting. But this seeming impossibility has been achieved by Mr. Hussell in his work entitled "North Devon Churches." The author possesses two special advantages—the professional knowledge of an architect with the skill of an artist, and thorough local knowledge. The former has enabled him to produce many representations and sketch plans of the churches, their windows, towers, tombs, corbels, screens, fonts, and other details; while his local knowledge and patient research into original sources of information have saved him from falling into the blunders—often grotesque, always regrettable—which are found in the pages of some "Guide Books," written by strangers after a brief visit and a look into works out of date. The outcome of these qualifications is the production of a work most attractive in its illustrations, and interesting and instructive in its letterpress, both of which are highly creditable to the printers and publishers also. The number of churches treated is twenty-one. It may be confidently expected that the readers of this volume will ask for more, and it is to be hoped that the number of purchasers of this instalment will be such as to encourage Mr. Hussell and the publishers to satisfy the demand.

THOS. WAINWRIGHT.

North Devon Athenæum, Barnstaple.



THE Studies of some of the Ancient Parish Churches contained in the pages of this book, consist of historical records (where such exist) relating to the structures, gathered up from various sources, and supplemented by my own observations, sketches, and measurements. In most cases I have found the number of recorded ancient building and other dates to be very scanty, very few having been handed down from the Gothic periods (13th, 14th, and 15th centuries) during which the buildings, as we now have them, were being developed. The general reader should be reminded that each period of Gothic Architecture had its particular conventional forms and details, which bore a general resemblance to each other, no matter what the distance may have been between the churches—e.g., an ancient church, of a certain period, situated in the south of England, will contain mouldings and other features of the same design and detail as those found in a north-country church of the same period. Why such a system prevailed has not been, so far as I know, satisfactorily determined—the secret still remains with the freemasons of the Middle Ages, who must have had close intercourse with each other. (The subject is a very interesting one, and has given rise to much speculation.)

Consequently, the reader will understand that it is quite possible by examining the details, and especially the mouldings, of an ancient church—even in the absence of dates—to ascertain at about what time it was erected. By a close study of the architecture of each church, assisted by comparing certain features in those churches

PREFACES—(Continued).

where no ancient dates of construction have been obtainable, with similar features in others where such dates have been preserved, I am able to give, with, I venture to think, considerable nearness, the dates at which the various parts of the structures were erected.

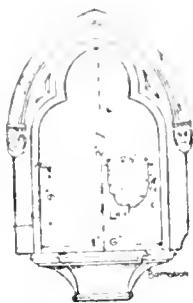
The work of preparing this book has extended, at intervals, over a period of two years, during which I have visited each church, and have studied, measured, and sketched the structures, their towers and most interesting features. No photographs have been taken, except the four forming the frontispiece. For head and tail pieces I have used sketches made by me on former home and foreign travels. The lists of vicars, etc., have been obtained, in some cases, direct from the present incumbents; and in others, from the lists hung up in the buildings, or from the sources named in the letterpress. Where no lists are given, the churches do not possess them, as the manuscripts have been lost or destroyed.

I desire to express my thanks to Mr. Thomas Wainwright, of the Barnstaple Athenaeum, for giving me access to several books containing historical references bearing on some of the churches; and also for information about several prominent persons of old times, who were associated with some of the parishes and churches; to the Rev. Frank Nesbitt, vicar of Buckfastleigh, S. Devon, and formerly Curate of Ilfracombe Parish Church, for a sketch of the cross (now obliterated) on the ancient tombstone referred to in the Appendix; to Mr. J. A. J. de Villiers of the British Museum, for his translation of the inscription on the Braunton chest; to the clergy and sextons, who have given me many valuable bits of information; to residents in several of the parishes, whose reminiscences have been found useful; and last, but not least, to the many friends who have come forward as Subscribers to the book.

To conclude, ancient churches are beautiful and romantic links with the romantic past, giving traces (in many cases the only substantial ones we have left) of the lives which our forefathers led—sometimes found depicted, in their own way, in the carving or sculpture, or by wall and screen paintings; sometimes conveyed in writing, by inscriptions on tombs or on monuments, and by entries in the parish registers and accounts. A book, such as is now before the reader, must of necessity be of a technical rather than a popular nature, and so may probably appeal principally to the architectural student; yet it is hoped that the general reader will find interest in its pages, and much matter has been included of a non-technical nature, really inseparable from and necessary for the proper understanding of the architecture. The churches described are some of the best of those situated in the northern portion of our fair county. I believe this is the first attempt at bringing together, in book form, studies of this nature of a number of the Devon churches, illustrated by pen and ink sketches; and although in their preparation the labour has been great, yet it has been most interesting, and I shall be well repaid if the reader finds pleasure and profit in the perusal of the book.

ALLEN T. HUSSELL.

Ilfracombe, August, 1909.



Barnstaple.

Parish Church of St. Peter.



HE busy and prosperous market town of Barnstaple and the agricultural emporium of North Devon is finely situated on the broad and beautiful estuary of the River Taw, about seven miles up from Barnstaple Bay, into which the river flows. It is a place of great antiquity, being formerly a demesne of the Saxon Kings; and Athelstane is said to have built the castle—remains of which are still in existence and forming part of a residence now on the site. The town possesses a fine ancient bridge, enlarged and restored in the 19th century, and consisting of sixteen arches dating from the 13th century. It is almost as long and famous as Bideford Bridge; and from it Tom Faggers—that most romantic of highwaymen—leaped his mare into the river to escape arrest. Tom's real name was Fergus, and he was once a blacksmith at South Molton.

The church of St. Peter is situated nearly in the centre of the town, on a site between High Street and Boutport Street. It consists of a nave and chancel, with north and south aisles to each, a north transept and south steeple. It was restored during the period 1866 to 1882, at a cost of £4,000, by the late Sir G. Gilbert Scott, R.A.; and, at the same time, the south wall was rebuilt and extended outwards. In 1820, galleries were erected, the seating accommodation being then increased to 1,400. The galleries were removed during the restoration, and the church has now sittings for about 900. The interior length is 121 feet 3 inches, and the width across nave and aisles 68 feet 2 inches. The registers date from the year 1538, and are perfect, excepting during five years of the Civil War. The original structure, erected in 1318 (Edward II.), consisted of the present nave, steeple and chancel. About the year 1670 (Charles II.), north and south aisles were added to the nave and chancel. The style is Perpendicular, except the steeple, and there are remains of Decorated or 14th century work. Traces of the lines of the 14th century roofs show in the walling of the nave and chancel gables; and also the straight joints where the 17th century aisles join these walls. There is also a trace of what appears to have been a holy water stoup, now walled up at the right hand side of the west entrance. The chancel is very roomy, providing excellent choir accommodation, with a fine organ—the gift, in 1764, of Sir George Amyand, Bart., who was one of the M.P.'s for Barnstaple for the years 1759-60 (George II. and III.). The casing of the west front is very handsome, with carved corbels to the projecting portions, in the Renaissance style. The organ formerly stood at the west end of the nave, being placed in its present position in the north aisle of the chancel when the church was restored. The roofs are the usual Devonian cradle or wagon-shaped style. They are open-timbered throughout the entire building (no plastering being introduced in any part), and are ornamented with carved bosses, the chancel roof having, in addition, carved angel figures resting on plain stone corbels. The uniform design and construction

of these roofs gives a grand effect to the interior of the church. A considerable amount of the old roofing remains, and is in a good state of preservation.

There are several stained glass windows. The one at the end of the south aisle of the chancel—a four-light memorial to Mr. Fred Lee, R.A.—is excellent, the subjects being scenes from the life of Christ, done in subdued tints, buff and brown predominating. There is also a very nicely coloured four-light memorial window in the transept to Mr. R. Bremridge—a former M.P. for the borough.

The large west window was erected by the parishioners in remembrance of the recovery from fever, in 1871, of His Majesty King Edward VII. (the then Prince of Wales), the subjects being the raising of the widow's son at Nain, and five miracles of St. Peter and St. Paul. This window has been stated to be probably unique in its commemoration of the above event. The east window was erected in 1854.

The many fine mural monuments—several of which are to former Mayors of Barnstaple—are a great feature, some being very elaborate and richly decorated. They are principally of the 17th century, and show that the town of Barnstaple must have been a place of considerable commercial importance when our great northern towns were almost unknown. The one over the entrance to the south aisle of the chancel is very elegant, in the Italian Renaissance style, with finely under-cut carving, and another at the west end of the south aisle of the nave (to Richard Ferris, who was twice Mayor of the borough, and died in 1647) has two curiously carved swags with a pick and shovel, hour glass, cross-bones and coffin lid interlaced.

A slate slab, liable to be overlooked, in the chancel paving, bears the name of one Prouse, who was Mayor of Barnstaple in the time of the Spanish Armada (1588, Elizabeth).

The inscriptions on some of the monuments are very quaint. That on Richard Beaple's is here given. (He was a merchant who died in 1643, and was thrice Mayor of the borough).

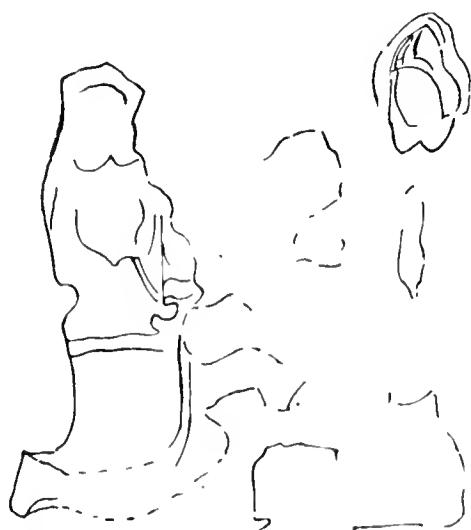


FIG. 6

Barnstaple

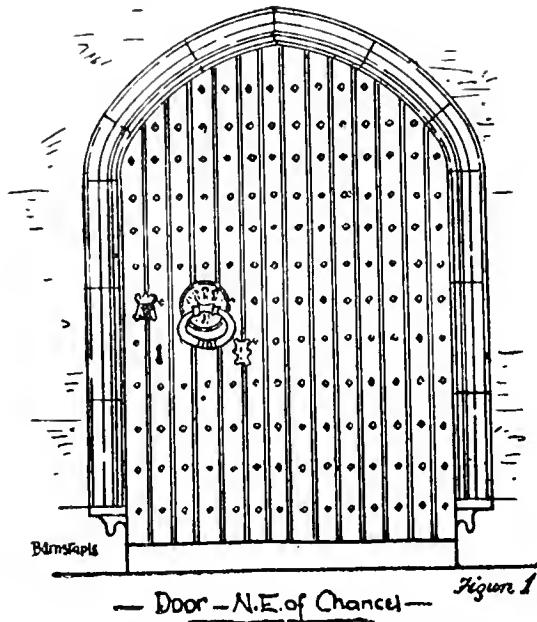


Figure 1

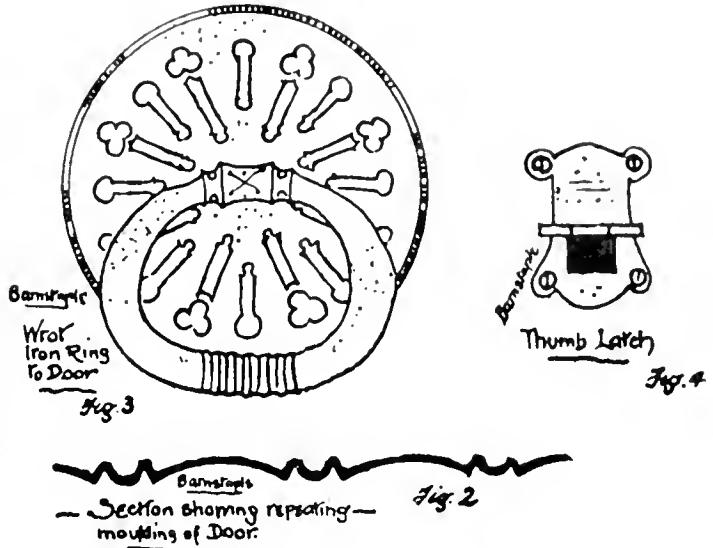
"Weret not more wisely done if wth consent
Wee joined to batter down this monument
Lest when the sorrowing poor lift up their eyes
They drown the voyce o'th sermon with their cryes
Let that bee others doome such as can give
With liberall spirit, but onely whiles they live.
As for this Senator, his nobler minde
Within one age did scorne to bee confind
For which to future ages he convayd
So rich a portion duly to bee payd
That thenceforth tears being banisht, it might bring
To the orphans joy and make peor widows sing
Let those who'de have their monuments to stand
Take fayr example from this bounteous hand."

(The seventh and eighth lines of the above should be particularly noted).

In the south aisle of the chancel is a mural monument of special interest, erected by the Revd. Martin Blake, to the memory of his son and four other children, who died when quite young. Mr. Blake held the living from 1628 to 1673, and suffered much during the Commonwealth, having been suspended — or more technically speaking, sequestered — from the living, but not actually deprived of it, the benefice never having been vacant between the above dates. One of the panels on the monument depicts the pulpit empty and the congregation waiting for the vicar.

The fresco (fig. 6) on the north side of the blank wall forming the western termination to the arcing of the north aisle of the nave, is interesting. It covers a space of 3 feet 11 inches in height, by 3 feet 4 inches in width, and although somewhat indistinct, two figures can be partly traced, one resembling a bishop, or other church dignitary, and the other the kneeling figure of a woman. This fresco cannot be very old, seeing that the wall on which it is found must have been an exterior wall (and

not plastered) previous to the addition of the north and south aisles of the nave and chancel, about 1670. There is a fine old oak door between the church and the staircase to the Parish Room. The side facing the church is moulded with a repeating mould (fig. 2) right across the full width of the door, studded with numerous large nails. The wrought iron "sanctuary ring," plate and thumb latch, are of very pretty design (figs. 3 and 4). The design of the plate appears to have been a favourite one, plates of the same pattern being found on doors in several other North Devon churches. The modern stone pulpit, the reredos and font are excellent examples of the sculptor's art, very richly carved and of Tudor design. The brass eagle lectern — very handsome and massive — is in memory of Mr. John Edwards, who was



—VIEW from S.W.—
looking towards Tower.

Fig. 5

choirmaster of the church for the long period of 50 years. He was the father of Dr. Henry J. Edwards, who has achieved such fame in the musical world, and who holds the position of organist and choirmaster of the church.

The chancel retains a Decorated piscina (see head piece) of date about 1318 (Edward II.), and of rather larger size than is usually found. The opening is trefoil-headed, measuring 2 feet 7 inches in height, by 1 foot 6 inches in width, and surmounted with a label moulding, stopped with carved heads of saints. The projecting stone shelf is a modern addition. In the south aisle of the chancel, built into the south wall, is some Early Decorated work, said to be a piscina (fig. 7), with a trefoiled opening and a shallow sunk panel on each side, finished with a moulded label. One cannot help thinking that it is doubtful if this is a piscina at all. It looks more like a portion of some arcaded panelling, taken from the older or 14th century part of the church, and fixed in its present position when the aisles were built. The opening is only 4 inches deep, and there is no trace of a stone bowl—the ledge simply being plastered on the walling below. The label is finished abruptly at the returns, showing a clean cut—a joint no doubt originally occurring here, and the label continued on over the side panels.

The glory of this church is its broach spire. Mr. Lawrence Weaver, F.S.A., who recently read a paper on "The Earlier Lead Spires" before the Royal Institute of

British Architects, stated Barnstaple spire to be timber-framed leaded country." Its main effect the great height of the that of the tower on vertical luffer spire lights the unusual position of squinches which connect tower with the octagonal. The spire is twisted over to the south, the noticeable in the bulge

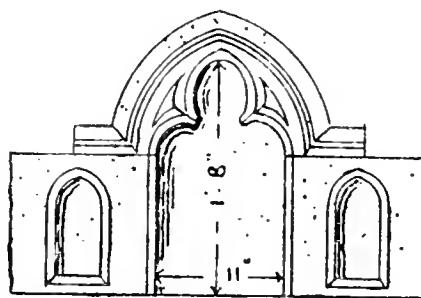


FIG. 7

Barnstaple

that he "considered the finest existing ancient broach spire in this seems to be produced by spire in proportion to which it stands. The are a fine feature, and the little lights over the the angles of the square spire, again add interest. near the top, and leans effect of which is very under the sill of the south spire light. It has been stated that this tilt is the result of a terrific thunder-storm which broke over the town in 1810. This may be, although it is curious that more damage was not done to the spire. From an unbiased point of view, the opinion one would form would be that the tilt—which for the height of the spire is not very considerable—has been the result of many years play of the sun's heat on the south face, creating a pulling movement of the lead and timbers—especially if green timber was used. The leadwork bears the date "1636," so presumably the spire was newly covered at that time. The sketch of the church is taken from the south-east, and shows how well the centrally placed steeple groups with the rest of the building.

VICARS OF BARNSTAPLE. FROM 1257.

1257—Walter, Treasurer of Exeter.	1403—John Lemman.
1276—Ralph Chahaur (Sir). Patron, Sir John de Audeley.	1412—William Pilton.
1327—Philip de Cruce (Sir).	1444—William Meolis.
1347—Robert de Edawys Lacy. Patron, King Edward III.	1448—Thomas Cole.
1355—John Hope. Patron, King Edward III.	1451—John Harding.
1373—Thomas Wace.	1451—John Stanbury.
1375—Roger dictus de Capiaco.	1460—John Nichol.
1393—John Foyres or Forest.	1462—John Holman.
1397—William Knight.	1462—Richard French.
	1484—Hugh Lynke.
	1484—John Beaumont.

1488—John Cookys.
John Pilton.

1518—Robert Thorn. Patron, King Henry VIII.

1526—Thomas Andrews.

1528—Thomas Wise. Patron, Sir Thomas Dennis Knight.

1539—Thomas Martin. Patrons, Walter Bowen Clerk and Ansria Chichester.

1555—Ambrose Berwicke. Patron, John Fawel, by grant of Lord William Howard.

1562—John Clarys (or Claris). Patron, Lord William Howard.

1590—Richard Baylie. Patron, Bartholomew Harris, by grant of Charles Lord Eſſingham.

1593—Trynder. Patron, Nicholas Granvillo.

1628—Martin Blake.

1673—John Boyse. Patron, John Sydenham.

1687—George Browning. Patron, Bishop Lamplugh.

1703—John Reed. Patrons, Daniel Bedingfield, John Ward, and John Poley.

1704—Daniel Hyde. Patrons, John Ward, and John Poley.

1710—Samuel Thompson. Patron, Michael Hyde.

1734—Thomas Steed. Patrons, Thomas Manaton and Sampson Manaton.

1765—William Marshall. Executors, the Hon. J. S. W. MacKenzie.

1809—John Michael Wade. Patrons, the Hon. J. S. W. MacKenzie (?) and Lady Bute.

1820—Henry Luxmore. Patron, J. A. S. Worthley.

1861—Gilbert Ernest Wallas. Patron, Lord Wharncliffe.

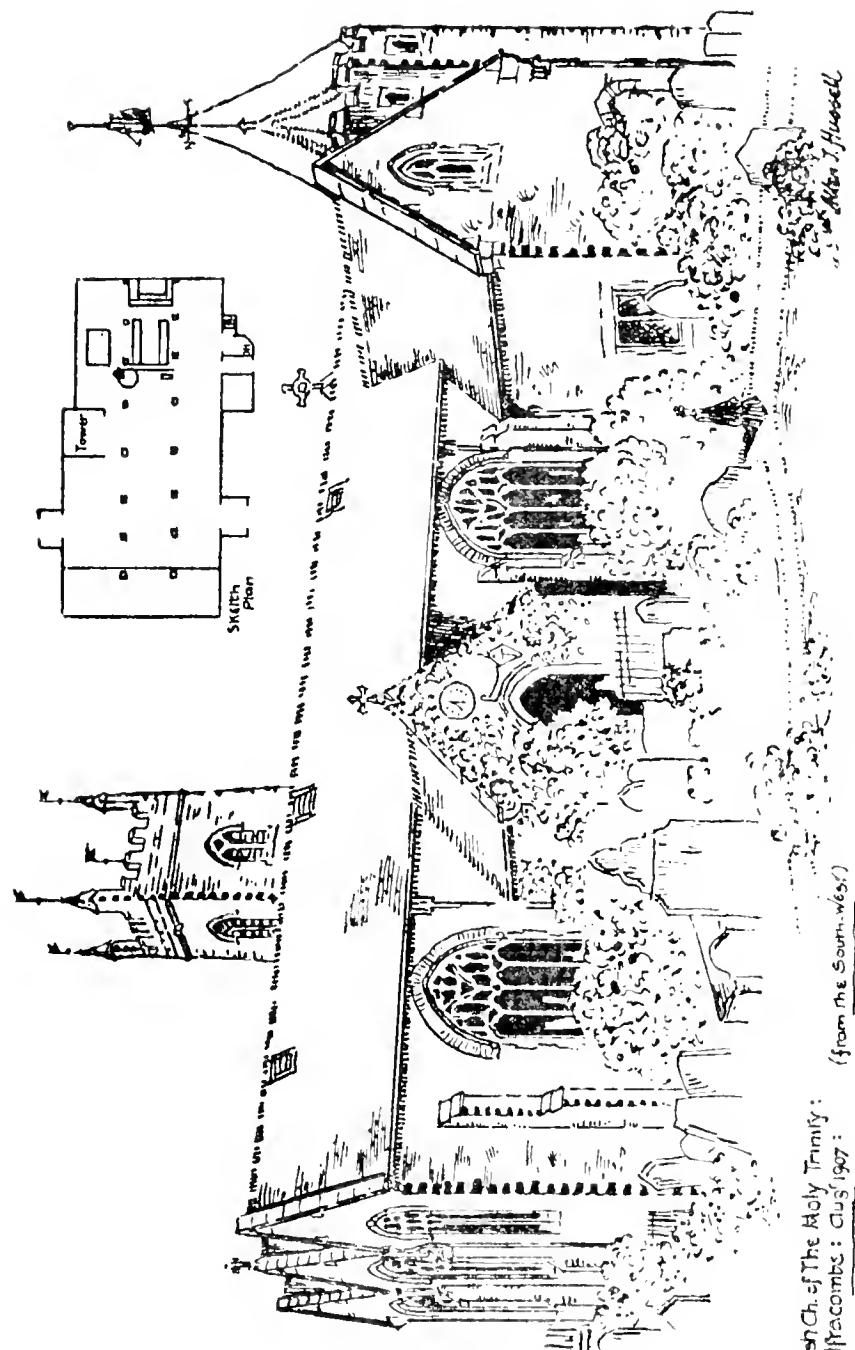
1877—Albert Eden Seymour. Patron, Lord Wharncliffe.

1885—John Walker Pulley. Patron, Lord Wharncliffe.

1889—Thomas Newton, LL.D. Patron, Lord Wharncliffe.

1907—Richard Turner. Patron, the Bishop of Exeter.





Parish Ch. of The Holy Trinity :
Ilfracombe : Cls 1907 :
(from the Southwest)

After J. Russell



Ilfracombe.

Parish Church of the Holy Trinity.



ILFRACOMBE, the popular seaside resort on the North Devon coast, and a place of singular beauty and variety of scenery, was known—probably as a port—in any case as far back as 1041 (Edward the Confessor), the manor being recorded as then held by one Robert. There is good foundation, therefore, for believing that the church may contain traces of Norman and even Saxon work, and this belief can be substantiated on examining the structure. It is placed on an elevated site at the western end of the town, and is worthy of its surroundings; the various parts of the building grouping together in a very picturesque way, and having as a background the Seven Hills, or Tors, and the blue waters of the Bristol Channel. There is evidence to show (which will be explained further on) that the original church was a Norman one.

The existing building is on plan nearly a complete rectangle, the interior measurements being 113 feet long and 62 feet wide. It consists of a nave and chancel, with north and south aisles to each, north and south porches, vestry and a north tower, containing a clock and eight bells. There is accommodation for 1,200 persons, and the registers date from 1567 (Elizabeth). The works of restoration have extended over the latter half of last century, and a new vestry has been built. The church as it now stands dates from the year 1321 (Edward II.). This is certain, for it is recorded in the bishop's register that Bishop Stapeldon, in his visitation that year, decided that the then existing church was too small for the requirements of the day, and gave a peremptory order to enlarge it. This was done, the nave being lengthened to the west 24 feet, nave aisles and a new chancel built. Although it is stated that the old building was enlarged, yet no doubt it had to be taken down entirely, as the construction of the nave arcading would have made this necessary, but the nave was probably built on the old foundations. This 14th century arcading consists of four bays on both sides of the nave, the piers being octagonal and the arches semi-octagonal, in section, both piers and arches being quite plain, except the neck mouldings to the piers. These mouldings are in the early Norman style, in the form of a square projecting fillet, with the bottom angle chamfered off. The stone used in the piers is chiefly yellow oolitic limestone, from Hamhill, Somerset, with occasional blocks of local blue limestone, of which the arches are also composed. Both rows of the arcading have a considerable tilt to the south—the result perhaps of pressure caused by the new type of roof put on in the 15th century, the tying powers being weakened.

The font (fig. 3) is probably late Norman, about 1160 (Henry II.). It is of the same stone as that in the nave piers, and was originally larger than now; but having

become injured—the result of being moved about from time to time to various positions in the church—it was, in 1861, reduced in size and the design re-cut; and the basin, which was formerly square, was filled up with stone, forming a shallow round basin quite out of keeping with the style. The carving consists of a regular design of three circles on each side, enclosing a star-shaped pattern, slender stems rising from the coving beneath the bowl and coming up between the circles, terminating with heads of corn. On the coving below the circles are interlacing leaves, of conventional plain design.

The jamb stones and part of the arch of a small round-headed window (possibly Norman), are built into the west wall of the south aisle. This window may have been in the Norman church, and placed here as a west light to the south aisle of the 14th century or Decorated church, erected by Bishop Stapeldon. (The aisles of that church would have been much narrower and less in height than the present aisles).

The font, and the little window built into the west wall, and also the neck mouldings of the piers—which are probably copies of mouldings found in the church taken down by Bishop Stapeldon—are altogether strong evidence to prove that the first stone-built church on the site was one erected in the Norman period. The church which followed it—built by the bishop's orders—consisted of a nave and narrow aisles (all under one roof), and a chancel. The nave and chancel remain in the existing church, and of the same extent, but the chancel walls have been opened out.

Part of the line of the 14th century roof was visible in the gable walling at the west end of the nave up to about 1865. Similar lines of Decorated roofs are still to be seen in the west walls of Barnstaple and Tawstock churches, not having been obliterated when refacing the walls.

In the following century—the 15th century or Perpendicular period—very many of the Devonshire churches were enlarged or re-built. Judging from the mouldings and the roofing, the work then done to Ilfracombe church included the widening and raising the aisles, and extending them eastwards the full length of the church;

raising the nave and chancel walls; opening out of the north and south walls of the chancel (one or both of the aisles possibly being used as Chantry chapels); the construction of the north porch; and the putting on of new roofs throughout the building. The chancel retains two piers, and two and a half of the arches of this Perpendicular work, and also a small supporting arch abutting on the south wall of the tower. There is not much of the 15th century walling left. The parts still remaining are the north wall of the nave north aisle, and the whole of the north porch. The nave wall, west of the porch, has been repaired and refaced with some of the old facing stone, but the walls of the porch, and the remainder aisle wall at the east of it,

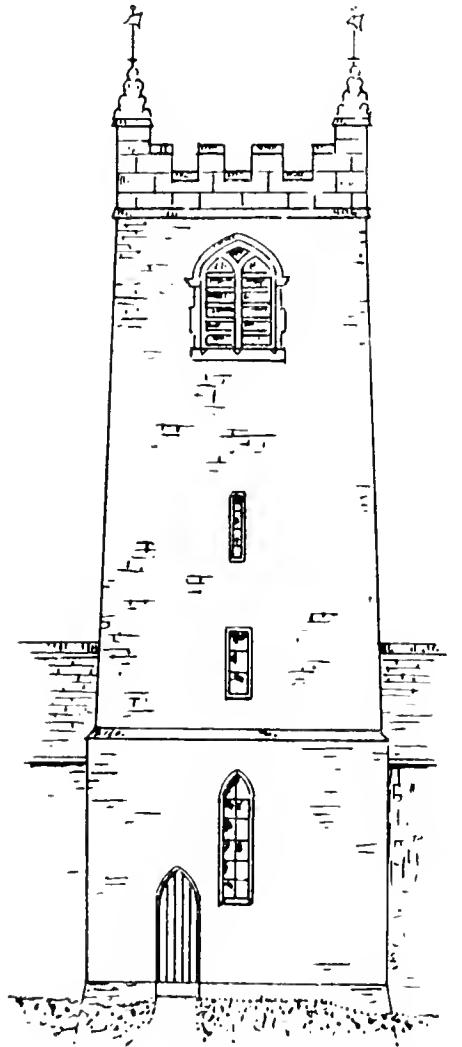
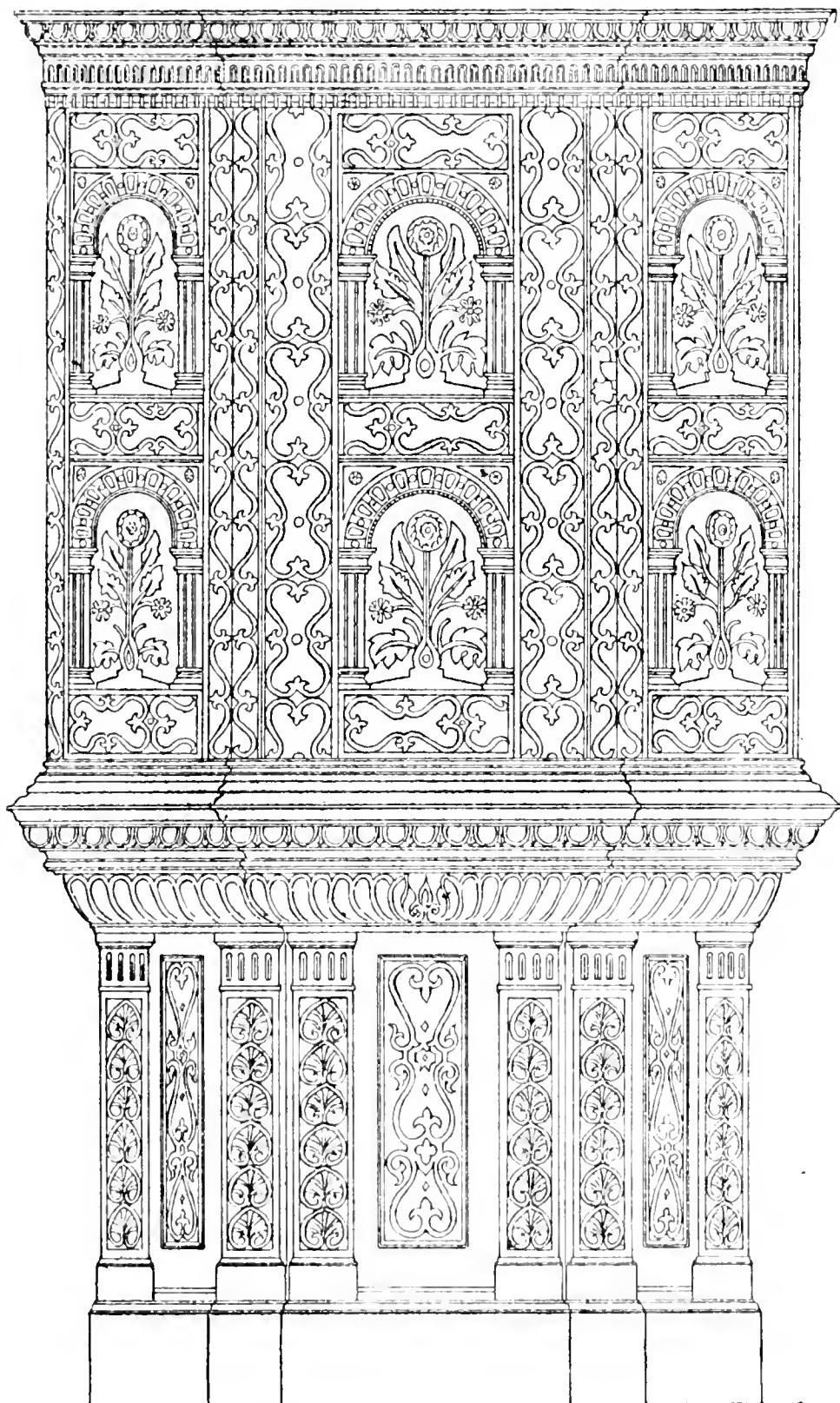


FIG G
Holy Trinity. Ilfracombe
The Tower. from the North



The Pulpit. Holy Trinity Ch. Ilfracombe.

appear to be the original work untouched. The facing stone is a bright red sandstone, such as is found in the neighbourhood of Combe Martin. The tower has been repaired and refaced in parts, and the remaining walls of the church have been rebuilt or restored during the latter half of the last century, and the south porch was probably built during that period. A porch formerly stood at the west end of the nave, and traces can be plainly seen where the doorway was walled up. A new vestry was built in 1894, and the handsome oak lych gate was also erected in that year, as a memorial to the Revd. J. M. Chanter, vicar of Ilfracombe from 1836 to 1887.

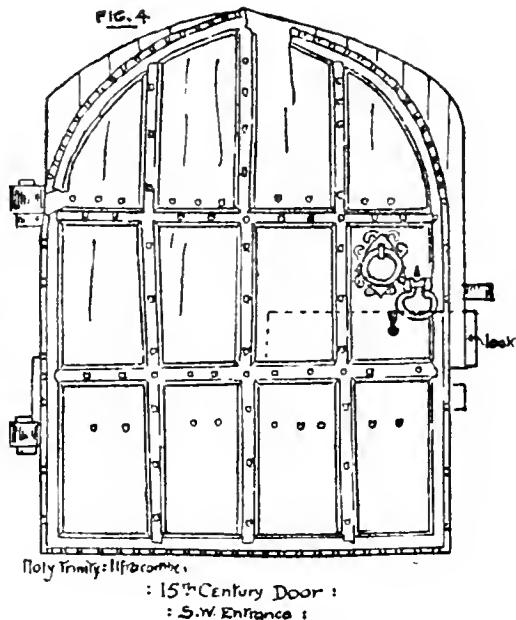
The tower is the oldest and most remarkable part of the church. It is 55 feet 6 inches in height from the ground to the top of the battlements, the pinnacles rising another 5 feet. As the sketch (fig. 6) shows, it starts with a sloping base, 5 feet high, and then rises perpendicularly another 16 feet. At the top of this is a set-back of 9 inches, above which the walls rise with sloping sides until reaching the battlements. The tower contains 8 bells and a clock.

The oldest bells are the tenor and number five, which date from 1743 (George II.). On the tenor is the inscription:—

"I to the church the living call,
And to the grave do summons all."

There is evidence, as follows, to prove that the tower originally stood apart from any other building, and that it was not a church tower. *1st.* If it was built by Bishop Stapeldon in 1321, it would have been placed further in than it now stands. Its south wall would have been in line with the nave arcading, and its ground storey forming a transept directly off from the nave, which is the customary plan of 14th century North Devon churches having similarly placed towers. *2nd.* The sloping base shows inside the church, and of sufficient extent to prove that it was intact on each side when the 14th century rebuilding took place. *3rd.* The set-back before referred to is not to be seen on the south side owing to the fact that this side was thinned down, when the large ground storey or transept arch was built, to the extent of the projection of the set-back. This was probably done to give increased room for the aisle at this part. *4th.* The walls of the lowest stage are very massive, being 4 feet 6 inches in thickness, and the base 6 feet in the thickest part. This indicates that the tower was built for the purposes of a fort, refuge and perhaps also a beacon light. There is no stone staircase winding up in any of the walls, and this rather strengthens the idea of the tower having been a fort—for such a staircase would have been a source of danger in case of attack. Access to the original upper parts may have been by ladders made to pull up out of reach.

The following opinions are advanced as to the history of this somewhat mysterious tower, after a very close study of the structure. It was probably built in the Saxon period, sometime between A.D. 900-1,000, the lower or upright portion below the set-back being what is left of the Saxon work. The upper two-thirds above the set-back, containing the ringers' and belfrey stages, is of Early Decorated character, resembling other 14th century towers found in North Devon—for example, Morte Hoe, with its "battering" or sloping unbuttressed walls. Just below the clock on



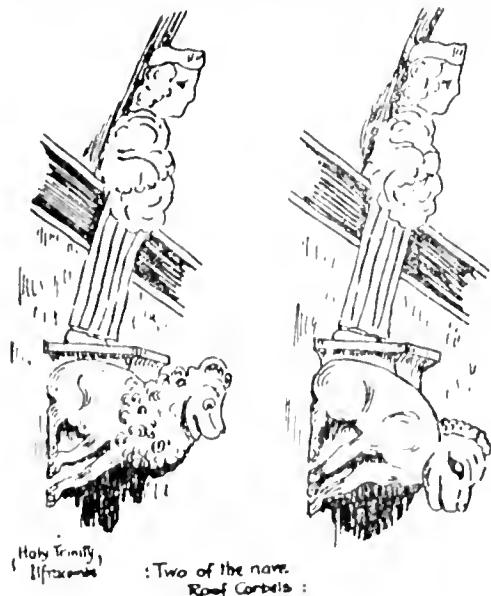
the east side are two narrow pointed lights, built up. When the church was being built in 1321, a transept (perhaps for use as a chantry chapel) was formed of the ground storey of the tower by removing sufficient of the south wall to construct the large existing arch, which is undoubtedly a 14th century arch—an equilateral pointed arch, quite plain, and very similar to the 14th century arches found in Pilton, Braunton and Westdown churches. The pointed windows found in the north and east walls of this ground storey would also have been formed at the same time. The latter window is now blocked up.

The tower, above the present ground storey, was then apparently taken down and rebuilt as a church tower, from the existing set-back up to the bottom of the parapet; the old stones being re-used, the walls built battering and the tower probably finished with a low timber spire, covered with lead or with oak shingling. The existing battlemented parapet and the pinnacles are of Late 15th century work, and may have been built when the church was extended in that century; and the large two-light belfry openings are restorations of possible Tudor work. The facings of the tower have been considerably repaired from time to time, so that any Saxon "long and short work" at the quoins of the ground storey, would long ago have been obliterated. On each side of the transept or ground storey arch, part of the walling has been cut back, and at the west corner has been splayed off as well. This may have been done in the 15th century, when the aisles were extended and widened, so that worshippers seated near the north wall of the nave aisle should obtain a better view of the altar, and the thinning away of the east corner may have been done to give increased room in the aisle.

All the roofs, with the exception of the chancel, are the original Perpendicular ones, and are good specimens, especially that in the nave. They are all "wagon" roofs, of oak, with plastered panels divided by moulded ribs with bosses at the intersections. The bosses of the nave roof are splendidly carved in conventional floral and leaf designs, with the exception of one row—the carving of which contains grotesque faces, and another row carved with double-headed eagles. The bosses of the roofs of the entire south aisle and also the north aisle of chancel are also carved, but not so richly as those in the nave. The 15th century bosses of the nave north aisle roof are missing, and their places have been filled in with plain moulded blocks. The north porch has a very interesting Perpendicular open-timbered oak wagon roof with carved bosses, some of them containing queer little grotesque heads, and on the

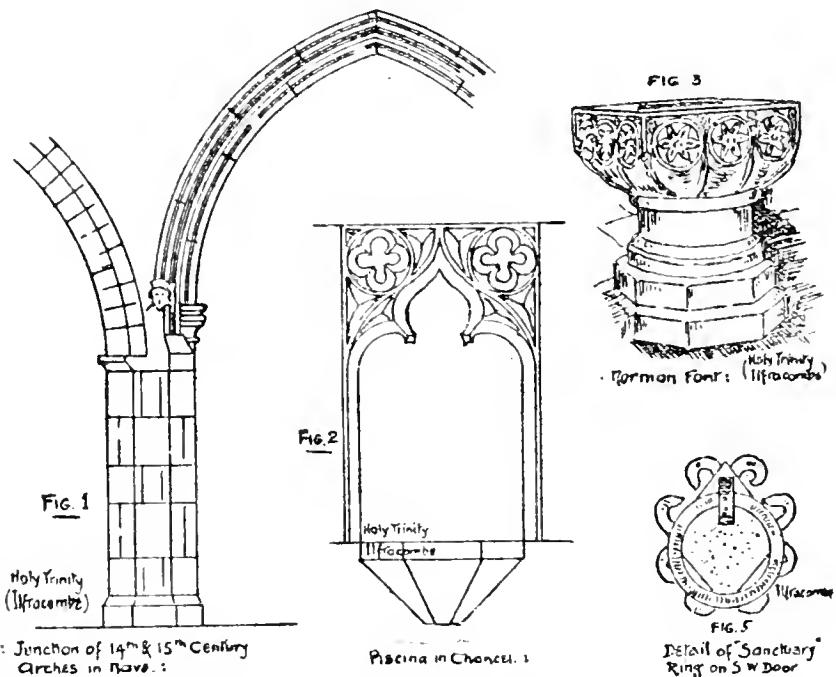
wall plates are carved paterae. Eighteen panels of the nave roof, above where the old rood screen stood, contained carved ribs with main and diagonal cresting. The carving was restored in 1899, and north and south dormer windows with carved linings inserted to light the roof at this part. The oak panelling of the chancel roof is modern, ornamented with carved bosses and a beautiful carved cresting surmounting the wall plates, all the carving of this roof being the work, in 1905, of two ladies of the town.

The stone corbels in the nave are unique. They are very fine both in design and workmanship, and should make this church famous. There are 28 of them—14 each side of the nave—and they are placed about 18 inches below the wall plates of the roof. One on the north side has been nearly destroyed—perhaps by a falling timber when the fifteenth century



roof was put on—and another is rather damaged; otherwise they are, as far as one can see, perfect. They are grotesquely carved animals, except one, a bird, on the north side. Sketches of two are herewith given. Most probably they date from the Decorated period of Bishop Stapeldon's church enlargement (the time of much redundancy in ornament), and their purpose must have been to give a support to the roof trusses of the Decorated roof, preceding the present one. Their size, and also the area of the moulded pads on the top of each, precludes the idea that they were intended to support the present unwinged figures of angels, with which they are quite out of scale. These angels are distinctly of later date than the corbels, being Perpendicular, coarsely carved and with characteristic upright drapery.

When the 15th century wagon roof was built (with trusses not requiring the support of the corbels) the carved wood angels were placed on the corbels and lightly attached to the ribs of the roof. The Early Perpendicular roof of Northam parish church has carved angels with outstretched wings almost identical with these (as they would have been in their originally complete state), but the corbels they rest on are of wood, plainly moulded, and only about half the size of the stone corbels in this church. The colour contrasts in the interior of the church give it a beautiful appearance. The white plastered panels of the nave and aisle roofs, the carved oak panels of the chancel roof, the blue, grey and buff stone of the nave and chancel arcading, and the stained glass windows, combine well together. The best of the windows is the one in the west wall of the south aisle of the nave. It is the gift of Miss Gilbert in memory of Miss Margaret Down, of Ilfracombe, the design being in groups of beautiful figure work done in soft colours. Another window, almost equally good, is the memorial one to Mr. Henry Sanderson, of Ilfracombe, who died in 1893. It is an exquisite piece of work; the minute detail showing in the drapery of the figures and the foliage of the background is very noticeable, the glass being in subdued tints of green, brown and silver. Amongst other mural monuments is one to Captain Richard Bowen, being a plain white marble inscription slab, surmounted by a splendidly carved group of guns and other war weapons, with a mast and sail, in white marble. This officer was of H.M.S. Terpsichore, and fell at Teneriffe in 1797 when spiking the guns, under order, so as to make them useless to the enemy. All who took part in this work lost their lives. In the south-west entrance there is a fine old oak Perpendicular door (fig. 4) in a good state of preservation, and with its original fittings all complete. The lock is very long, measuring two feet three inches, and the "sanctuary" ring and plate are unusually large and massive (fig. 5). A very



curious privilege prevailed in old times with which these rings were connected. Any person who might have broken the laws of the land could, by running to the nearest church and remaining there, after touching the "sanctuary ring," escape punishment. In 1624, in the reign of James I., this privilege was done away with.

The pulpit—a sketch of which is here given—is of oak; the portion between the top of the pedestal and the cornice being of Jacobean (Early 17th century) work. The cornice and pedestal are modern, in the same style as the old portion.

The chancel retains one of the most elegant piscinas in North Devon (fig. 2). It is of the Perpendicular period, about 1450 (Henry VI.), and an engraving of it appears in Parker's "Glossary of Architecture"—which is a proof of its merit. The height is 1 foot 11 inches and the width 1 foot 2 inches.

The church formerly possessed a rood screen (no doubt of 15th or Early 16th century date) for, previous to 1864, the rood loft staircase was in existence in the south wall; but when the wall was rebuilt in that year the staircase was unfortunately destroyed. It is also recorded that fragments of the screen were discovered within the church when it was partially restored in 1859.

The two carved stone angel figures (see head and tail-piece) in the north porch are very valuable relics of 15th century work, in a good state of preservation—with the exception of the lower part of the wings. They originally stood, one on each side of the nave, at the top of the first piers west of the pulpit; and it is quite possible that all the former 15th century piers of the chancel had similar angel figures resting at the top of the caps.

Fig. 1 shows the clever way in which the 15th century nave aisles are brought down on to the 14th century piers.

The organ is a particularly fine toned three manual instrument, and well placed in an open position in the north aisle at the back of the choir stalls. In the early part of the last century the old organ stood in a gallery at the west end of the nave and was flanked by choir galleries. In 1855 it was enlarged and placed on the floor at the west end, and about 1865 was removed to the ground storey of the tower. In 1888 it was again moved, and placed where it now stands. One or two items from the church accounts relating to the "orchestra" of old times will be of interest. It is evident that the "beas vile" did not play "second fiddle," judging from the prominence given to it in the accounts.

Four extracts are here given:—

		£ S. D.
1810.—For teaching of Twelve Young Voices to assist the former Choir, From Easter, 1809, to Easter, 1810 ...		4 4 0
And to the Choir		1 1 0
Paid for one String for the Bass Viol		1 6
1818.—Paid for the Singers and Strings to the Bass Viol ...		3 10 3
1823.—Paid for part of Beas Vile		3 9 6
1824.—Paid Mr. Harris for Concert flute with 4 silver keys ...		2 0 0
Violin Strings, etc.		3 2

The church presents a very picturesque appearance viewed from the south-west, and the long unbroken roof line of the south aisle is very effective.

LIST OF INCUMBENTS.

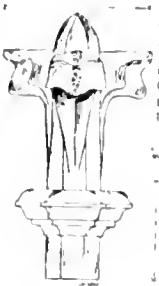
RECTORS.

1263.—Oliver de Tracy.	1362.—William Polgrim.	1474.—Robert Spyer.
1272.—Henry de Montefort.	Thomas Barton.	1492.—Richard Norton.
1276.—Salomon de Roffa.	1416.—Hugh Herle.	1524.—George Groy.
1333.—John de Chambernoun.	John Morton.	1530.—Thomas Berwode.
Reginald de Chambernoun.	1459.—John Codie.	1544.—George Carew.
1335.—John de Lester.	1470.—William Chauntre.	
1349.—William Best.	1473.—John Bryde.	

VICARS.

1555.—Geoffrey Clepit.	1689.—William Read.
1583.—William Slatyer.	1691.—John Elmeston.
1584.—John Morrico.	1724.—Nathaniel Collier
1621.—William Buckland.	1728.—Thomas Stinton.
1621.—John Morrice, Junior.	1763.—John Bailey.
1633.—Robert Liverland.	1770.—John Vye.
1636.—John Reade.	1771.—Emmanuel May.
Leonard Prince.	1804.—Robert Dickenson.
1663.—Alexander Atkey.	1836.—John Mill Chanter.
1684.—Alan Lester.	1887.—Richard Martin.
1686.—Thomas Rowe.	1906.—Albert Eden Seymour.





Northam.

Parish Church of St. Margaret.



HIS fine building is situated on elevated ground in the centre of the village, overlooking Bideford Bay and Westward Ho! Pebble Ridge—a natural sea wall of grey boulders, slate and sandstone, extending about 2 miles in a straight line, and about 50 feet wide and 20 feet high. Saxon-Danish traditions linger around the neighbourhood, for it was at Kenwith Castle near by (where are the remains of ancient fortifications) that the fight began between the Danes under Hubba, and the Saxons under Alfred, in A.D. 878. The Danes were driven by the men of Devon as far as "Bloody Corner" on the outskirts of Northam. Here, cut off from their ships, they made their last stand, and a duel (so tradition says) was fought between two of the chieftains, some old stones, railed off, now marking the spot. Two miles down the Torridge is the Hubbastone, which the river boatmen will tell you marks the grave of Hubba, killed in that fierce battle, with 840 of his men, and their standard called "The Raven" captured.

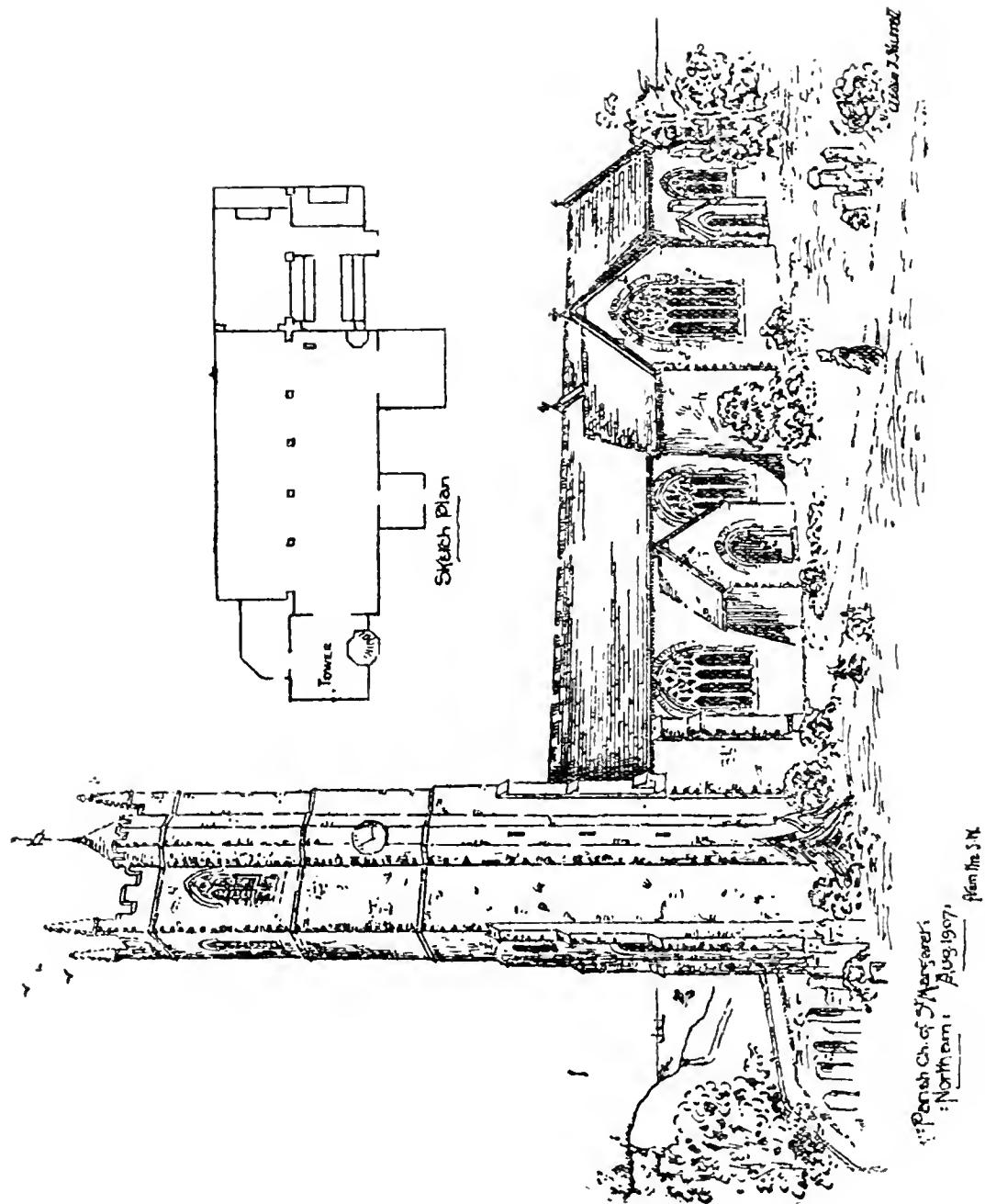
The church consists of a nave and chancel, with a north aisle to each; a south transept, south porch, vestry, and an embattled western tower with pinnacles, containing a clock and six bells. It is in the Perpendicular style, the existing old work being also in that style, with traces of Norman. It was completely restored between 1844 and 1865, at the close of which the chancel was built.

There are 600 sittings, and the registers date from 1538 (Henry VIII.).

The north aisle of the nave is of later date than the nave itself, having been built in 1593 (Elizabeth), as can be seen by the quaint inscription carved on the cap of the second pier west of the chancel, reading "This Yele was made Anno 1593." (Figs. 2 and 5.)

The nave and transept roofs are of the Early Perpendicular period, and are exceptionally fine specimens of that style, open-timbered, the timbering being of oak and chestnut. They are of the usual wagon or cradle form, and the spaces between the rafters are plastered.

At the intersection of the ribs are carved bosses, of floral and emblematical designs, coloured and gilded, contrasting well with the black timbering. Below the wall plates of the nave is a continuous row of quatrefoils, and at the foot of the trusses are carved angel figures with outstretched wings, resting on plain moulded wood corbels. The wall plates of the transept are richly carved with the conventional Perpendicular vine leaf and grapes. (Fig. 3.) The roof of the 16th century north aisle of nave is similar to that of the nave, except that the angel figures are more coarsely carved and have folded wings, do not rest on corbels, but are attached to the trusses.



The modern chancel has a finely carved hammer-beam roof. The nave arcading consists of five bays, and contains some Norman stonework, re-used.

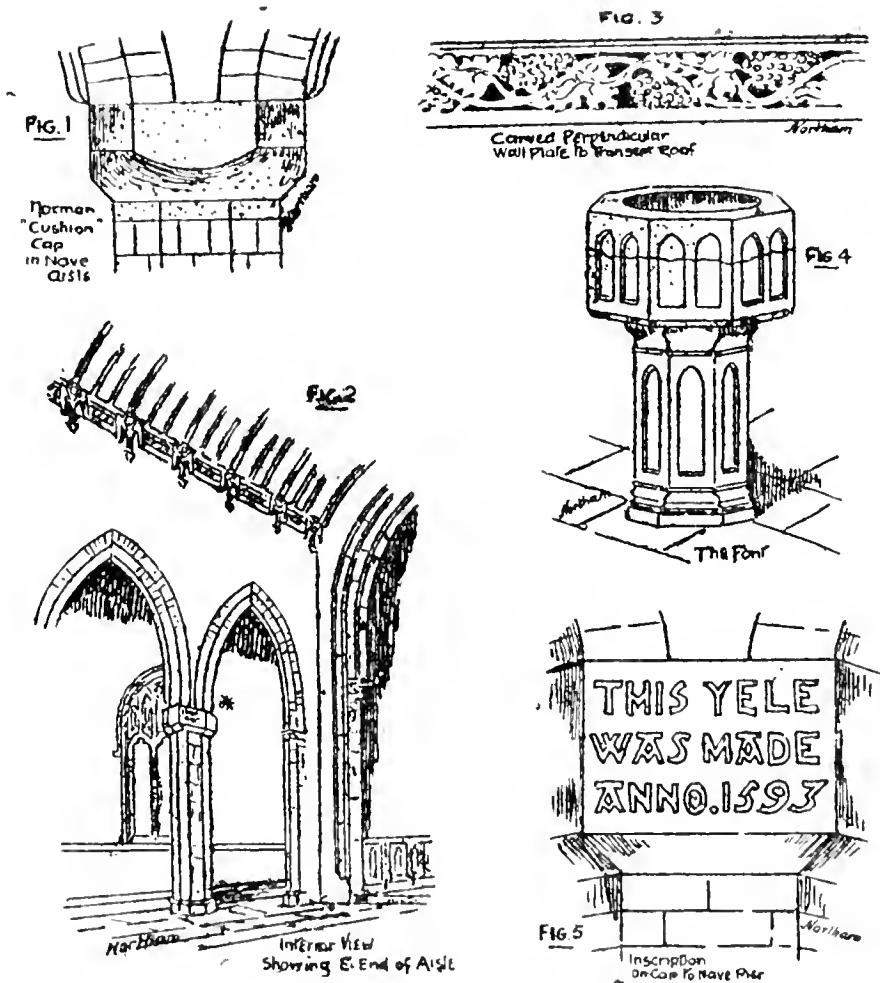
The second pier from the west has a Norman "cushion" capital of granite (fig. 1), the other caps being of stone, either plain octagonal blocks, about eighteen inches in depth, with the bottom edges splayed, or shallow neck moulds of Norman section.

The piers are octagonal and the arches plain chamfered, with a sub-arch to each. The existence of the Norman caps points to the fact that the original church may have been of that period, and that the nave of the present church still retained some of the Norman stonework when the north aisle was opened out.

The font (fig. 4) is octagonal, the basin being probably of Early Perpendicular date, evidently roughly used at one time, as it has been broken right across and joined together with metal cramps. It rests on a modern stem, also octagonal, with a moulded cap and base.

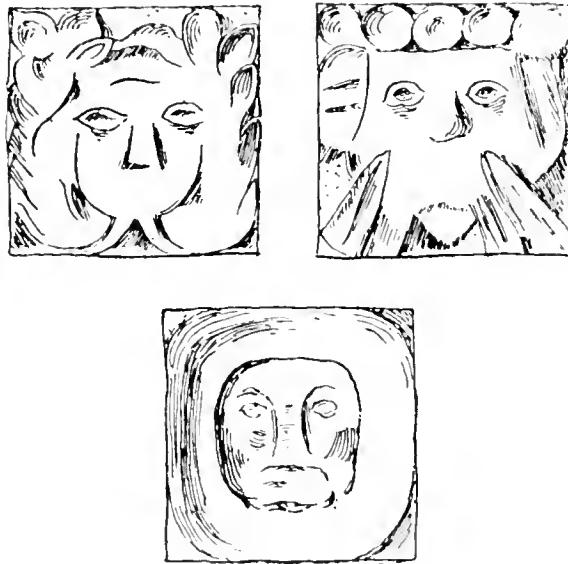
The pulpit is a very handsome modern one, in stone, in the Decorated style, very delicately carved and with Devon marble shafts. It was the gift of the late Mr. Thrupp, of Northam, to whom the east window was erected. The organ forms a very ornamental and striking feature in the church. It is placed against the east wall of the chancel aisle, occupying a long and narrow space, and has a very fine case in the Decorated style, richly carved, and with a large amount of elaborate tracery-covered panelling. The window in the east wall forms a very pretty central background to the organ. The seating is modern, with traceried panels at the ends, and there are several stained memorial windows.

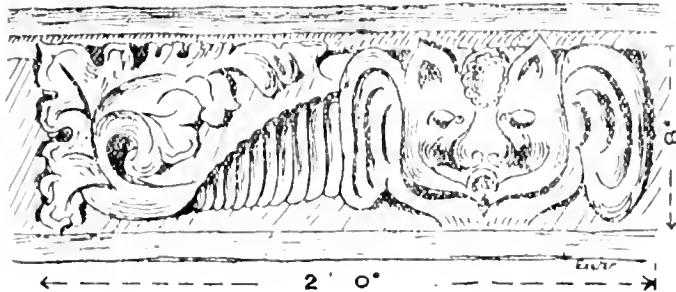
The tower is a very fine structure indeed, noticeable for its light and elegant appearance, which is accentuated by the buttresses stopping half way up. The staircase projects as a semi-octagon on the south side, the effect being very pleasing. The height is 97 feet to the top of the battlements, and the pinnacles rise another



10 feet. It is interesting to learn that for some time previous to 1846 the tower was plastered, and had a coating of whitewash to make it conspicuous as a landmark or guide for sailors far out at sea. This whitewashed plaster was removed when the vicar's predecessor, the late Rev. J. H. Gossett, became vicar in 1844. He, within two years of this date, began the work of restoration of the church, and it is believed that nearly, if not quite the first thing taken in hand, was the above work of stripping the plaster from the tower, and so bringing out the beauty of its detail.

The whole church is faced with local stone of a warm red tint, and is in a splendid state of preservation.





Bideford.

Parish Church of St. Mary.

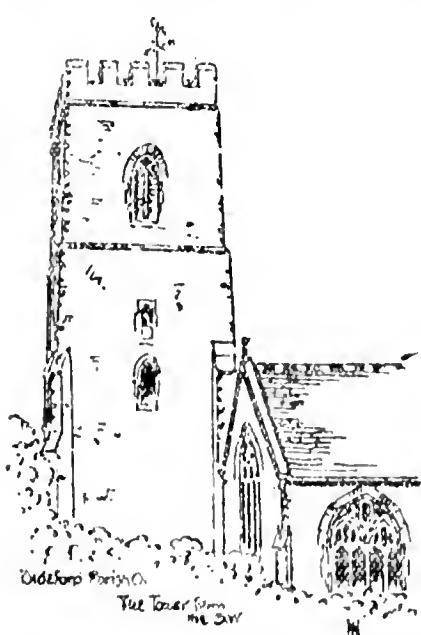


IDEFORD Parish Church is a modern building, except the tower. It was built on the site of a former church, in 1865, and is seated for about 1,280 persons, being one of the finest and probably the largest parish church in North-west Devon. It has been included in this series because it contains ancient features of considerable interest and has associations with past heroes. The font (fig. 2) shows that a Norman church originally stood on or near the site, and that this church gave place (judging from the tower) to a Late 13th century building, taken down when the present church was erected.

In the second church many of Queen Elizabeth's sea-chiefs must have worshipped. Bideford has memories of redoubtable deeds never to be forgotten, for did not Sir Richard Grenville hail from here—the hero of what is surely the most superb event in English History “the fight of the one and the fifty-three,” when, off Flores in the Azores (August 1591), he sustained an attack of the Spanish fleet of 53 sail and 10,000 men, against his own vessel the little “Revenge” alone, with a crew of only 103 men; repulsed the Spaniards 15 times, destroyed four of their vessels, killing upwards of 1,000 men, and only yielded when his powder was exhausted. He died

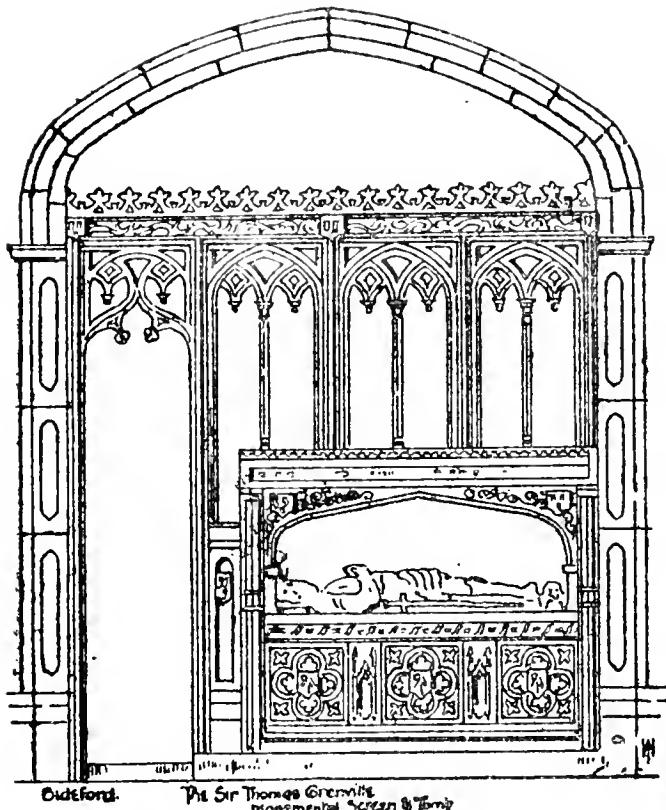
of his wounds within two days afterwards, on board the Spanish Admiral's vessel. How well Tennyson's magnificent ballad describes it—

“ And the sun went down, and the stars
came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of
the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
with her battle-thunder and flame :
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd,
and so could fight us no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like this
in the world before ? ”



Aye, and there are men of the same breed still left down Devon way ever ready for tough work should they be wanted—for “Shire of the Sea-Kings” is no empty title.

FIG. 1



Bideford. The Sir Thomas Grenville Monumental Screen & Tomb

is the screen at the back of the font beneath the tower arch. The panels are made up of old Flemish pew ends, most elaborately carved with floral work and figures of soldiers. We may assume that these panels were portions of Flemish furniture obtained by Bideford sailors and used in the seating of the former church.

The tower is ancient — probably Late 13th century — of date about 1260 (Edward I.). It was restored in 1865 and is 72 feet high, of two stages, with walls slightly battering and with buttresses to the lower stage, a battlemented parapet and two-light belfry openings, and contains a clock and 8 bells.

It has a fine Early pointed ground-storey arch built with the local blue stone, forming, with the stained window at the back, a very charming feature.

The former church was taken down (except the tower) because it was in bad repair, had been continually altered, and was inconvenient and not large enough.

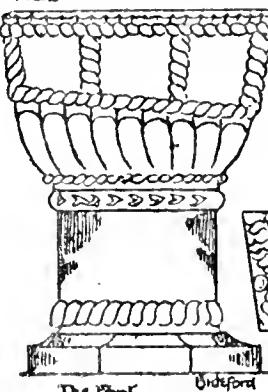
LIST OF RECTORS.

- 1261.—Henry de Brattone.
- 1268.—Roger de Leycestre.
- 1268.—William Dunnynge.
- 1318.—Henry Toyte.
- 1324.—Walter Prodhomme.
- 1351.—Nicholas de Braybroke.
- 1381.—Robert Braybroke.
- 1382.—Roger Beaumont.
- 1421.—John Walhoppe.
- 1458.—Lewis Pollard.

Fig. 1 shows the imposing monument to Sir Thomas Graynfylde (Grenville)—an ancestor of Sir Richard Grenville—who died in 1513 (Henry VIII.). It is a fine example of Tudor Gothic work, in stone, and consisting of a screen of four bays combined with an arched tomb, on which lies a recumbent effigy clad in plate armour. On the tomb are shields of arms of Grenville.

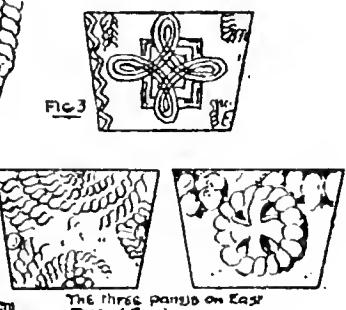
The font is an ancient Norman one, of granite, and is one of the best specimens of Early Norman work in the country—date about 1080 (William I). The bowl is square and rests on a circular stem, and the carving is done in cable moulding and scalloped work, and with three carved panels on the east face of the bowl. (fig. 3.) The way that the cable mould rises on the north and south sides is very peculiar. A feature that immediately attracts the eye, owing largely to its foreign appearance,

FIG. 2



The Font

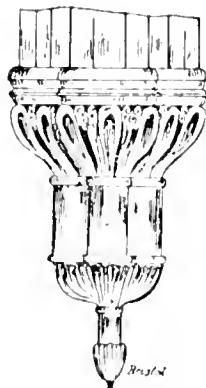
FIG. 3

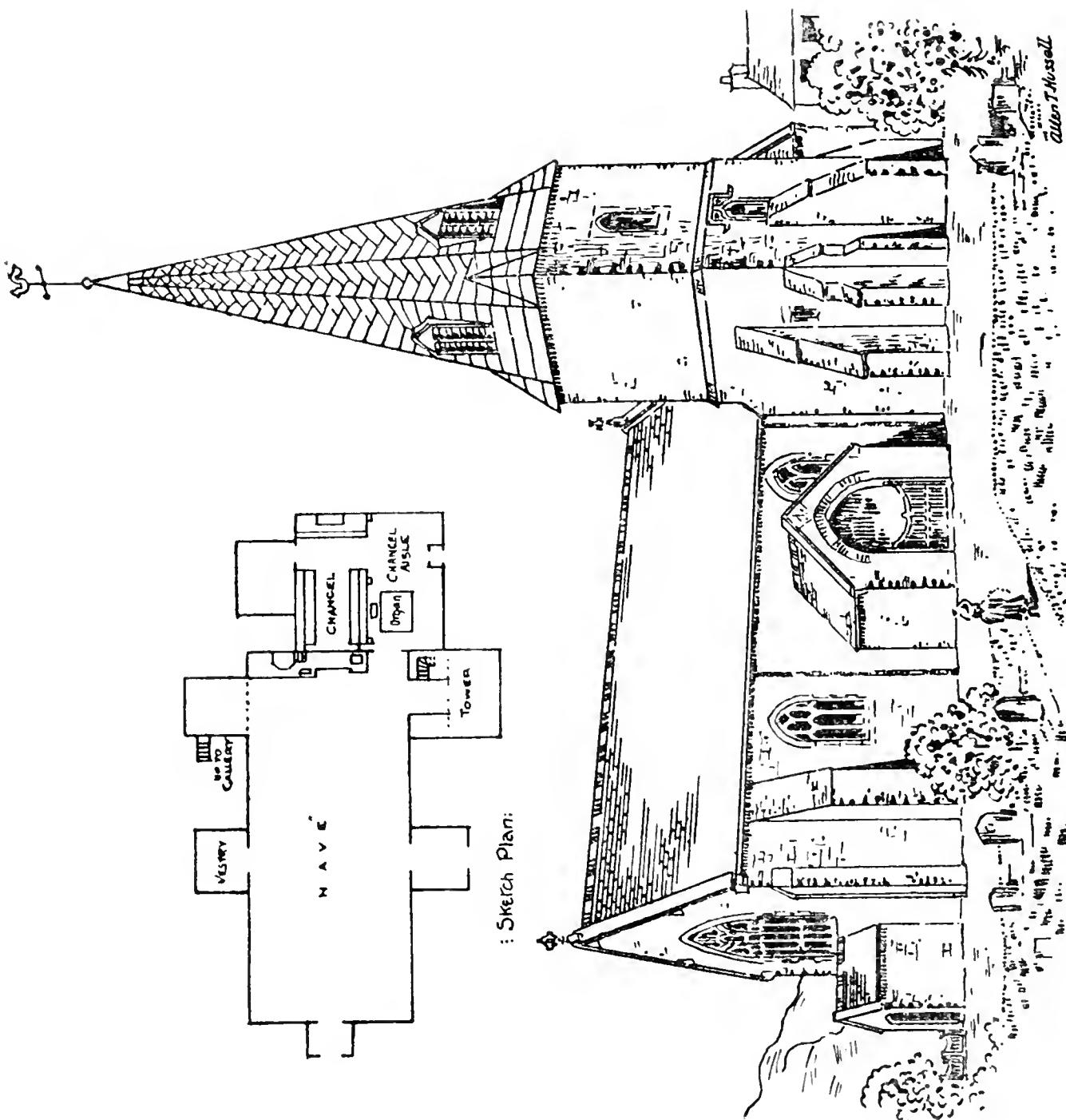


The three panels on East Face of Bowl (to larger scale)

1494.—John Nichelle.
 1500.—Robert Corwalle.
 1504.—John Graynfyld.
 1509.—Richard Symon.
 1511.—John Susan.
 1514.—Richard Gilbert.
 1524.—John Andrew.
 1547.—Richard Browno.
 1547.—Richard Arscot.
 1571.—William James.
 1591.—William Easte.
 1625.—Philip Isacke.
 1643.—Arthur Gifford.
 1660.—Nathaniel Eaton.

1674.—Michael Ogilby.
 1700.—Christopher Bedford.
 1723.—John Harbert.
 1727.—George Nichols.
 1744.—John Whitfield.
 1783.—William Smith.
 1804.—Richard Keats.
 1812.—William Walter.
 1844.—Richard Hugh Koats Buck.
 1853.—Francis Ley Bazeley.
 1878.—Roger Granville (descendant of Sir Richard Grenville).
 1896.—Thomas Newton Leeke.





Parish Ch. of St. Bremock,
Braunton : Sep. 1997. (from the S.E.)



Braunton.

Parish Church of St. Brannock.



HE traditional St. Brannock did well when he founded the church and village here, for Braunton is one of the most beautifully situated of the Barnstaple Bay villages, with far-reaching land and marine scenery. From one of its hills—known as West Hill—Bideford Bridge can be seen on a clear day, away to the south—although 7 miles distant as the crow flies. The village is set back partly on the slopes of low hills, and partly on the level land at their base, 2 miles from the sea, where are the dangerous Saunton Sands, with the melancholy desert of sand-hills known as "Braunton Burrows" in the rear, keeping back the waters of Barnstaple Bay (a spot full of peril at times for crippled vessels) from the rich pastoral land which stretches from the Burrows up to Braunton.

The church is more than usually interesting, is of uncommon plan, and contains some fine wood carving of various dates. The body-part of the structure consists of a wide nave without aisles. In addition, there is a chancel with south aisle; a south steeple with a transept formed by the ground sterey of the tower portion; a north transept with gallery; south and west porches and vestries. The nave is no less than 34 feet wide, and the interior length of the church is 108 feet 6 inches. There are about 450 sittings, and the registers—in a fine state of preservation—date from the year 1538.

The chancel and transept arches, the font, steeple and the oldest of the windows, show the church to have been erected in the Early Decorated period, about 1310 (Edward II.), the building then consisting of the present nave, chancel, north transept and steeple. The chancel arch is formed with a main and sub-arch, both being double-chamfered. (This arch closely resembles the north transept Decorated arch in the interesting church of Westdown.) The north wall of the chancel is doubtless the original wall, and contains three rather wide lancet windows, the reveals retaining the original dressed freestone. The east window also has the original Early Perpendicular jamb-stones and label-mould, with very vigourously carved stops to the latter, which may represent one of the Lancastrian kings—possibly Henry IV. or Henry V. and wife.

Placing the erection of the church at about A.D. 1310, that date would bring it nearly contemporary with the erection of Barnstaple parish church in A.D. 1316, the plan of which at that date resembled Braunton church, consisting of a nave and chancel, and with a tower and spire of the same description. The broach spire of both churches points to the probability of the close relation in date of their erection.

The low altitude of the chancel arch as compared with the height of the nave is

very noticeable, and shows that the walls were very probably raised when the present roof of the nave was put on.

The basin of the font (fig. 7) is exceptionally interesting. It is square, and constructed of a very hard blue limestone, with shallow sunk designs on each side representing Early Decorated windows, with natural leaf design in the spandrels, and an indication of the ball-flower ornament in the lower part of the quatre-foil on the east side.

At each corner are trefoil-headed niches, with carved heads of saints in each. The stem and small pillars are modern. 14th century fonts are rare in North Devon, and this one therefore is of great value.

Some of the buttresses of the church are remarkable for their enormous size, but it is most probable that they were not built at the same time as the church, but were provided afterwards to support weaker portions of the building. This may clearly be seen in those of the tower, especially the one on the south side. A certain amount of the walling of the nave and tower has been rebuilt; and where the modern west window has been inserted, the wall under it has a "set-off" or ledge about six inches wide, showing that when the window was built the walling around and about it was not made so thick as the old wall. The chancel aisle, with arcading of two bays, is of Tudor period, perhaps about 1530 (Henry VIII.) The arches of the arcading are not pointed, being of segmental form; but no doubt they would have been four-centred pointed arches if there had been sufficient room between the top of the arches and the wall plates for the extra height required.

The piers have peculiar debased capitals (fig. 4), with the bell imperfectly defined and a tier of four angular fillets acting as the abaci to the arches, and the south door to the aisle has an exterior four-centred pointed arch (restored) of Tudor design, with carved roses as stops to the label mould. A straight joint shows where the east wall of the aisle meets the older wall of the chancel; and the small portion of its old return wall, at the east end of the aisle arcading, is thicker than the moulded piers, and a slope can be seen at the top where the eaves of the chancel roof finished.

Before the chancel aisle and its arch communicating with the nave were built, the opening in the wall over the arch was of course a window corresponding with the one on the north side of the chancel main arch.

The south transept, formed by the ground storey of the tower, has a piscina in its east wall; so that this transept was probably a chantry chapel at one time. The piscina is in a decayed condition, of a plain pointed design, and possibly of 14th century date. In the east wall of this transept is a peculiar little slanting window, and a similar one in the west wall. They are about 8 feet from the floor and run diagonally through the thickness of the walls; the openings being 1 foot 6 inches inside and narrowing to 6 inches outside. The one in the east wall crosses in a N.E. direction and the other S.W.

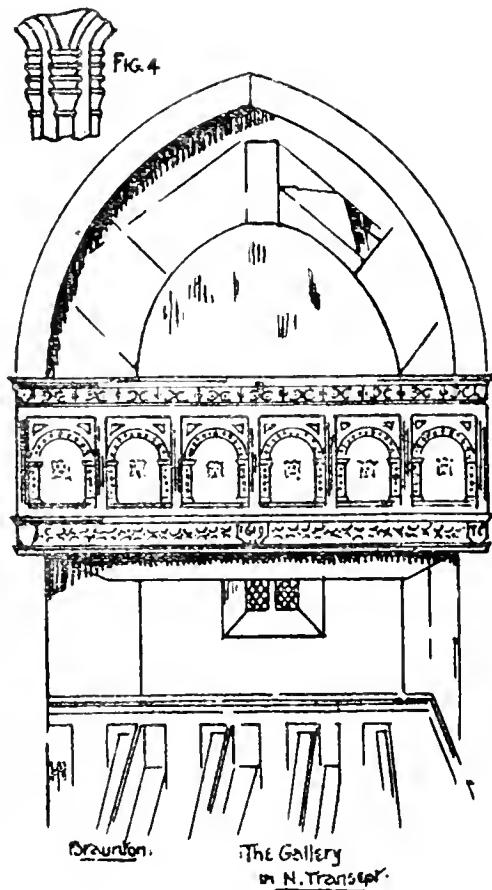


FIG. 1

The north transept arch is an equilateral pointed arch (of the same description as that to the south transept), quite plain, and with the outer corners of the jambs chamfered off for a few feet above the floor. In the north wall of the transept is a plain arched opening, beneath which very probably stood an altar tomb. (Westdown church has a similar recess in its north transept, but more ornamental, and containing an oaken effigy.)

The vestry, which opens out from the north wall of the chancel, is probably of Perpendicular date. It remains very much as originally erected (and with the open-timbered roof showing), except that it now consists of two floors—a vestry, with loft over. The doorway communicating with the chancel is cut out of the walling beneath the bottom splay of the middle lancet window, headroom being obtained by carrying up the pointed arch of the doorway in front and clear of the window splay. The above window looks into the loft, and is an additional proof that the vestry wing is of later date than the north wall of the chancel.

The north and south windows of the nave, although filled in with Perpendicular tracery, are possibly Early Decorated (14th century) window openings, as they are unusually narrow for 15th century nave windows. The works of restoration to the church have been the reparation of the timbering of the nave roof about 1850, and new coverings to the same roof in 1887. Also in the latter year the bells were rehung and two new ones provided. The south transept was restored a few years ago, and this year (1908) the large west window has received new tracery—a copy of the old.

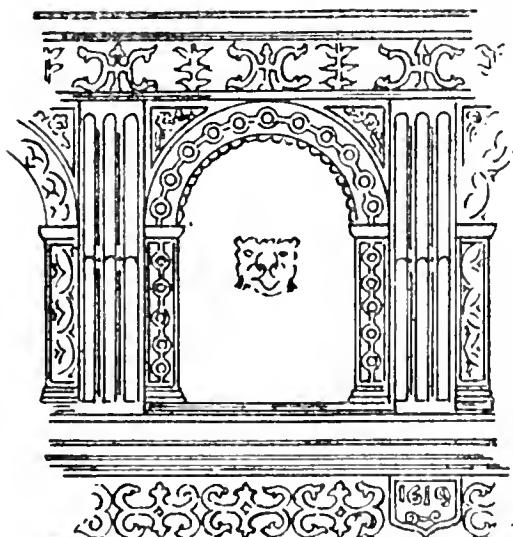


FIG. 2.

Braunton

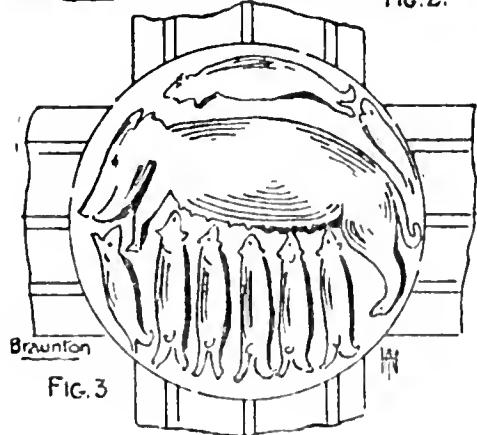


FIG. 3.

Braunton

The ancient broach spire (one of the few which Devonshire possesses) is very strongly framed, and boarded in oak, covered with lead. Unlike most timber spires—particularly when lead-covered—the sun has not twisted it, thanks no doubt to its well-seasoned oak, and remains (as far as the unaided eye can see) quite upright from all points of view. The lead rolls are very cleverly brought down from the diagonal to the horizontal, starting from the spire lights and continuing down to the eaves. Portions of the lead work have been renewed within recent years, perhaps when the nave roof was reslated. The tower is quite plain, consisting of the ground storey and the ringers' stage, with belfry over, containing 8 bells. The clock shows on the east side. The walling has been considerably rebuilt or repaired, and large and heavy-looking central buttresses have been added to strengthen the walls. The original buttresses are possibly those in pairs at the angles. The approximate combined height of the tower and spire is 100 feet from the ground to the top of the weather-cock. The following are inscriptions found on three of the bells, taken off by the author:—

1. "God preserve Queen Anne and the church. E. Evans, fecit. 1713."
2. "Let my sound move thee to God's Glory. Antho. Gregory, vicar, 1713."

3. On the tenor. "Glory be to God on high. Robert Chichester, Esqr., caused me and the second to be recast by John Taylor, Oxford. The Revd. J. W. R. Landon, vicar. W. Perryman, W. Dyer, church wardens, 1830."

The roofs are wagon-shaped throughout the church, open-timbered in the nave, close-boarded and panelled in the chancel aisle. They all have carved bosses; those in the nave and chancel being gilded, and in the aisle left plain. The nave roof is a fine example of a Perpendicular roof

of wide span. It measures 34 feet from wall to wall. The old builders, who often introduced many curious bits in their carved work, indulged themselves when constructing this roof by carving on one of the bosses a representation of a sow and litter of pigs (fig. 3). This boss is found about half-way up the roof, nearly in line with the north door, and alludes to the well-known tradition of St. Brannock (who is said to have planted the Cross in this part of Devon about A.D. 581) being instructed in a dream to erect a church on the spot where he should first meet with a sow and litter of pigs. There is a boss carved with the same device to be found on the roof of the porch of Newton St. Cyres church, near Exeter, and also on the roof of Sampford Courtenay church, near Okehampton. The Rev. J. A. Welsh Collins, the vicar of the former church, has informed the author that the tradition is that when it was contemplated to build the church, there were two squires resident in the parish, and that they differed as to the site of the church, it being eventually agreed upon that a sow, about to give birth to a litter, should be turned out, and that wherever the young porkers were born, there the church should be built. Putting tradition aside, the vicar thinks that the boss was carved in this way as a "type of fertility." The Rev. William F. Surtees, the vicar of the latter church, agrees, but gives alternative explanations as follow:—"a. The boss represents a rude symbol of fecundity, possibly leading to the thought of life—eternal life. b. The boss represents 'Mother Church.'" Mr. Collins thinks he has noticed the boss in more than one Cornish church.

The grand feature of Braunton church is its fine old carved bench ends, perhaps not equalled anywhere in Devon. There are 84 of them, and, in addition, four bench fronts. Some show Late Perpendicular, and others Tudor work, in great variety of designs; many having initial letters of their carvers or donors carved on shields, and, amongst others, four bear emblems of the Crucifixion, and two others have coats of



Braunton. FIG. 5



Braunton. FIG. 6

arms. Figures 5 and 6 show two of the most elaborate—the former, found near the north transept, clearly showing that sport was closely associated with the church in those days; and the latter, found in the middle aisle near the chancel, shows St. Brannock and his traditional cow. Here again we have a curious tradition relating to this bench, and of which there are more than one version; but Mr. Wainwright, curator of the Barnstaple Athenaeum, has kindly given the following information with regard to it. He says: “The oldest ‘cow’ story is to the effect that the cow belonged to St. Brannock, and that it was chopped in pieces, and when boiling in the cauldron came out whole and sound at his call!” The usual desecration of church property, which occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries, may be seen here; for where carved images of saints occur in the bench ends, the faces are in many cases cut off, and also the entire carving has been completely hacked away from one of the ends near the choir vestry door. The benches are adze-hewn; and, as illustrating the lavish use of the wood, it may be stated that the seats are from two to three inches thick, the book-boards from two to three-and-a-half inches, and the bench ends as much as three to four inches thick, and all in a fine state of preservation, except one bench near the west entrance. The top rails are heavily moulded, cut out of the solid, and finished with a bold bead at the top, giving a very rich effect. The tail-piece shows what is known as the “Judas” bench end, depicting a hand holding a bag of money. It is found in the very last row of benches, close by the doorway, at the west end of the church—a significant fact, surely. The benches are probably of chestnut, as the “clash” or medullary rays of oak are absent; and the wood is coarser and more brittle-looking than oak.

Some excellent carved oak Jacobean work is to be seen, more particularly in the gallery front of the north transept (figs. 1 and 2) and the pulpit. The former is dated 1619 (James I.), is 4 feet 2 inches in height, and divided into six panels, of two alternate designs, the framing between the panels being fluted and reeded, and in the centre of each panel is a carved lion’s head.

The pulpit is similar to the Jacobean one in Ilfracombe church, but is of bolder and richer detail.

Behind the altar is some old oak panelling, dated 1653 (Commonwealth period), in a mixed Jacobean and Classic style, which at one time formed the sounding-board over the pulpit. About thirty years ago the pulpit stood in a raised position against the south wall; and on a line with it were the reading-pew and clerk’s desk, without any division, forming what is known as a “three-decker.” At that time a gallery, with a plain panelled front, stretched across the full width of the nave, at its eastern end, entered by a door from the belfry stairs. The doorway is now blocked up. The vicar possesses an interesting photograph, taken before the “three-decker” and gallery were removed. The narrow windows on each side of the chancel arch were

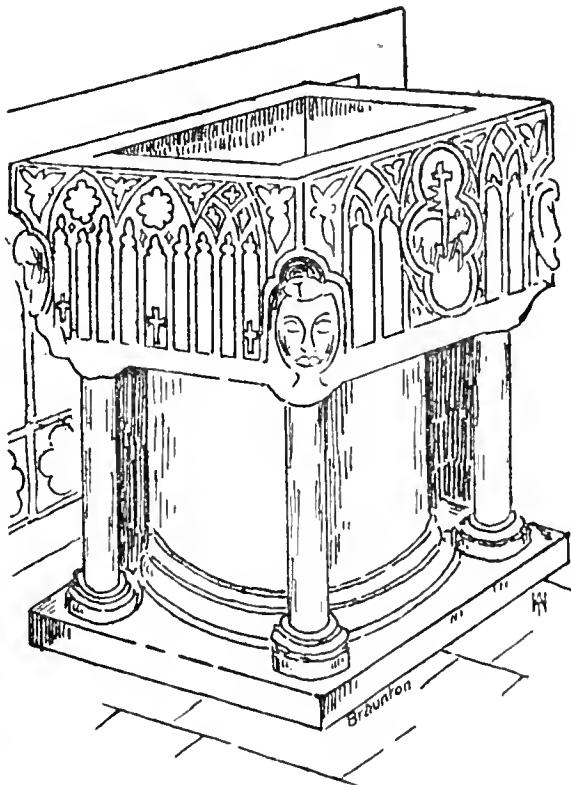


FIG. 7.

at that time cased on the inner side with thin masonry, plastered. When the gallery was taken down, the masonry lining was removed, exposing the windows as they now stand ; and on the wide inner splayed reveals of the left-hand, or north window, a fine fresco was discovered, depicting the standing figure of a tall man in chains. Care was not taken, however, to preserve the fresco, and nothing now remains of it except a slight trace of colour on the plaster.

No doubt Braunton church, in common with others, had its rood-screen and loft ; and probably the doorway (mentioned above) in the belfry staircase led into the rood loft. The existing chaneel screen is Perpendicular, with traceried bays and of very plain design. In the writer's opinion it is either nothing but the back of what was



FIG. 9

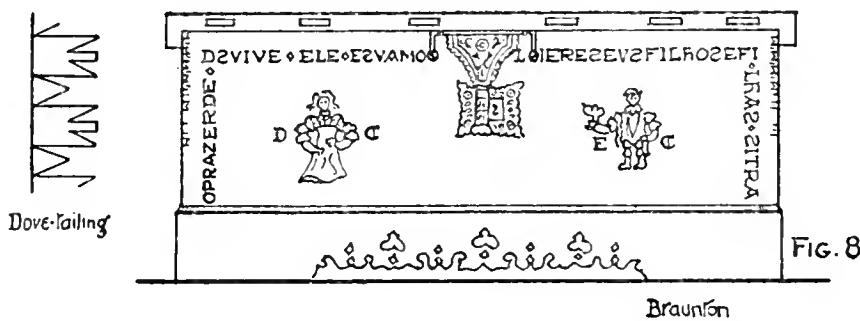


FIG. 8

once a double screen (the side now facing west then being reversed), or it was brought from another church after the removal of the rood-screen.

The chest (fig. 8), which is placed in the chaneel aisle, is of exceptional interest. It is 6 feet in length, 2 feet in width, and 2 feet 8 inches in height, and is ornamented on the front with lightly incised figures, in black lines, of a man and woman (figs. 9), against which are the initials "E.C." and "D.C." respectively (presumably man and wife). The front edge of the lid and the top edge of the front of the chest are also ornamented with incised work ; the former with little rectangular patterns of a floral design, and the latter a row of doves. The wrought iron handle and lock plate are of extreme beauty (fig. 10). The handle revolves in spindles at the top ends, and is used for lifting up the lid ; and the initials "E.C."

are engraved on the upper part—doubtless the initials of the man represented on the front of the chest, as they are the same. An incised inscription in black lines runs around the top and sides of the front. There is a tradition in the village that the chest is an Armada one, and that it was cast up on Santon Sands. In that case, however, it would have been much damaged; and as there are no traces of injury and it is in excellent repair, the tradition cannot be entertained. The handle and plate are of distinctly Spanish design, and the two figures are Spanish or Portuguese in appearance. The inscription is one of the most puzzling and extraordinary ever written, and has baffled some of the best experts in languages in the country. The difficulty is that the words are not divided properly, but run into each other, and some are mis-spelt, altogether forming one of the queerest jumbles imaginable. It

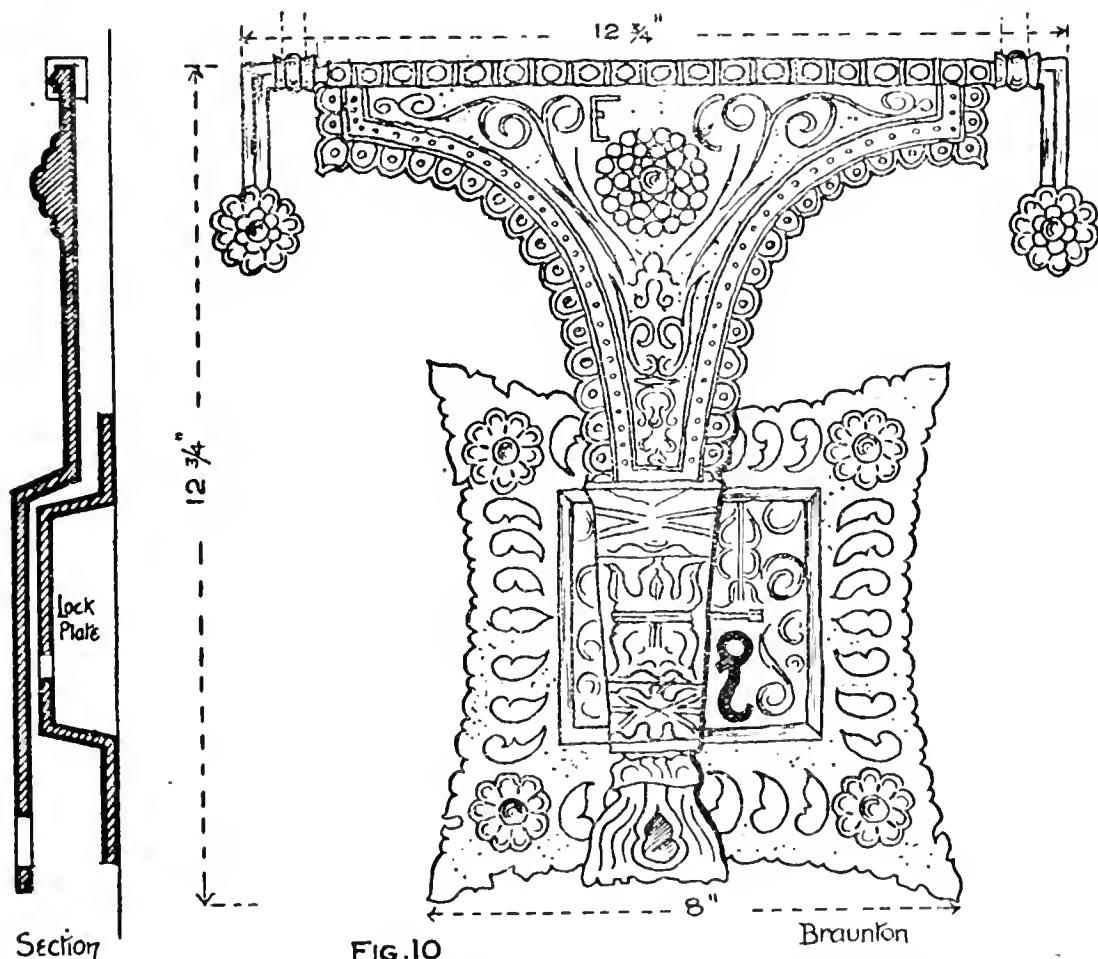


FIG.10

occurred to the author to submit the inscription to the British Museum in order to ascertain if it could be deciphered and translated there. Having done so, it was passed to the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, and taken in hand by Mr. J. A. J. de Villiers, in the Library, who has very kindly solved the mystery, and has given the following translation—which all readers will agree is very clever—once and for all definitely establishing the nationality of this chest. The inscription as arranged on the chest is as follows:—

OPRAZERDE	DSVIVE	ELE	ESVAMO
LHERESEVSFILHOSEFI	LIHAS	SITRA	

Mr. de Villiers says it is in Portuguese, and gives the following arrangement and translation :—

OF(P)RAZER Presented	DE by	IO(D)SVIVE Joshua	or ? (Joseph Eli)	ELE him	E and	SUA his
MOLHER wife	E and	SEVS his	FILHOS sons	E and	FILHAS daughters	SITRA CINTRA

Cintra is on the east coast of Portugal, about 20 miles from Lisbon. The chest is made of a light yellow wood (perhaps cedar or olive), with very intricate dovetailing at the corners, and although the original hinges are missing, yet their positions can be traced. May we say that the chest was a wedding present to "E.C." and "D.C.?"

It dates possibly from the latter part of the 16th century or the beginning of the 17th, and may have been captured by an English sailor, perhaps from the Armada or in the Spanish wars of James I. No doubt many of these pieces of furniture or heirlooms found their way into this country in those times. Mr. John Chugg, of Morte Hoe, has in his possession a foreign chest of about the same date and size as the one in Braunton church, and made of the same kind of wood, but it has no inscription, and the lock and fastenings are quite plain. This chest is undoubtedly also Spanish or Portuguese, having large incised figures, on the front, of a man and woman, with a coat-of-arms between, in the form of two wild boars holding a shield.

The altar is formed of an old Jacobean table, of neat design, and discovered some years ago in a loft.

There is a magnificent monument, in the Renaissance style, attached to the south wall of the nave, near the transept—a really splendid piece of work—to the Incledon family, of Buckland, 1558 to 1746, a mass of carving surrounding the inscription slab, richly decorated. It is of great size, occupying a space 14 feet high by 7 feet wide.

On the south wall of the chancel aisle is preserved a fine brass to "Lady Elizabeth Bowcer," with an inscription as follows :—

"Here lyeth lady Elizabeth Bowcer, daughter of John, Erle of Bathe, & sometyme wyffe to Edward Chicester Esquier the wyche lady Elizabeth decessyd the xxiii day of August in the yere of or Lorde God mdxlviij. Apon whose soule God have mercy."

The lady is represented as kneeling before a desk, the sides of which are ornamented with the "linen pattern." This brass is very interesting, as on the reverse side a few lines are deeply cut, forming a rough outline of a man's head. What this means it is difficult to say. It can hardly be meant to represent the lady's husband, as no possible likeness to anyone in particular could have been intended. May it not have been a joke on the part of the engraver, done when fixing the brass on to the slab in the aisle—its original position ?

The church is well placed, at the eastern end of the village, on a level site ; and viewed from the south-west is perhaps the most striking and unusual looking of all the North Devon churches.

The Chapel of St. Brannock or St. Michael.

It may be of interest to include here a short account of the little roofless chapel situated on the hill above the village, to the north-east, and of which a plan and sketch are given.

By some it is called St. Brannock and by others St. Michael, and is one of several chapels formerly in and near the village. Its four-centred arches indicate

that it was erected in the Tudor period—possibly about 1540. It is built in random rubble walling, of local stone, which is also used for the arches; but the reveals, or inner sides of the windows and doors, bear traces of having been formed up with dressed freestone, but only one block of this remains—in the east window—the building having been stripped of all except this piece. The walls are thick for the size of the building—2 feet 6 inches throughout—and are left rough on the inside, but there are slight traces of plastering. There are two entrances and three windows. A shallow porch protects the west entrance—the masonry of which is sloped back at the top, and continued up as a small projection around the west window. Part of the west gable remains, with its parapet; and the set-off for the roof timbers can be seen on the inner side of the parapet. Immediately adjoining, at the east end, there is an excavation in the ground, which appears to be the spot from which the stone for the walls was dug.

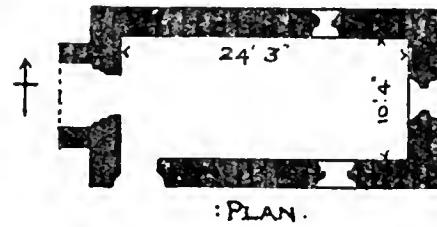
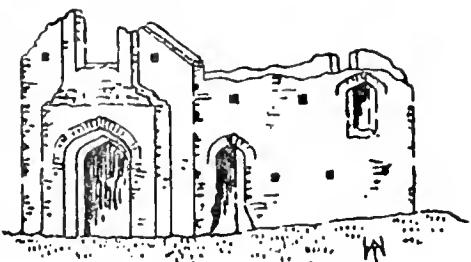
It is possible that the object of placing the chapel at such an altitude was that it should not only be a place for worship, but that it should have a guiding light, placed in a turret. The building, as situated, would have been admirably placed for this purpose, as it can be seen for miles around. There is a tradition that St. Brannock could not complete the building of this chapel because the materials were miraculously removed at night, after three attempts to complete, to another spot “down the hill,” and that the materials were used in the building of a church elsewhere in the village. One has heard of this tradition connected with other Devon churches, the culprits sometimes being the pixies or pisgies—mischievous little fairies believed in by our Devon fore-fathers. There is no evidence to show that the chapel was never completed—in fact there is proof to the contrary; for the parish accounts of Braunton state that in 1555 the sum of 2s. 8d. was paid for “heling stones” for St. Brannock’s chapel—really meaning slates for the roof, probably obtained in this case from a local quarry producing stone of thin strata. The same term is still used for slates among many Devon builders. The above entry proves that the chapel was roofed and a completed building. When its use was discontinued it was allowed to become a ruin. In the walls are a few holes, which, at a distance, look like put-log holes for scaffolding, and would lead the casual observer to suppose that they are the original perforations; but as these holes go right through the thick walls, they cannot therefore be put-log holes, as it would have been unnecessary to provide a bearing for the put-logs of more than nine inches or so in the walls.

LIST OF VICARS OF BRAUNTON SINCE 1208.

This list was made out by the late Rev. J. Ingle Dredge, vicar of Buckland Brewer, and is based on the list compiled by Dr. Oliver.

1208.—Richard Briwerro.
 1231.—Roger de Kinkeleghe.
 1311.—Sir Andrew Dagom.
 1319.—Magister Bartholomeus de Cancto Laurencio.
 1373.—Robert Billepole.
 Robert Mayo, whose institution does not appear.

1427.—Thomas Freeman, M.A.
 Oliver Sennor, no date of institution.
 1494.—Thomas Collamor.
 1549.—Thomas Stott.
 Henry Hibbert, no date of institution.
 1558.—John Perte, B.A.
 1590.—John Vicario.



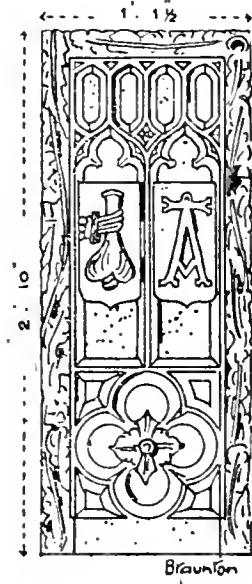
1608.—Benedict Browninge, M.A.
 1622.—William Challoner, the founder of Challoner's School.
 1667.—Femorum Pepys, M.A.
 1672.—Nicholas Beare, the donor of Beare's Charity.
 1693.—Anthony Gregory, M.A.
 1732.—Robert Gilbert, M.A.
 1750.—Charles Hinckesman, B.A.
 1759.—Benjamin Clement, B.A.
 1768.—Evan Rice, B.A.

1769.—John Marshall, M.A., on the appointment of Evan Rice to Bishopstowton.
 1772.—William Martin, B.A.
 1791.—William Blake, B.L.
 1796.—George Smith, M.A.
 1807.—Joseph Lane Yeomans, M.A.
 1826.—John Whittington Ready Landon, M.A.
 1880.—William Genn Morcom, M.A.
 1890.—Edward Robert Gotto, M.A.

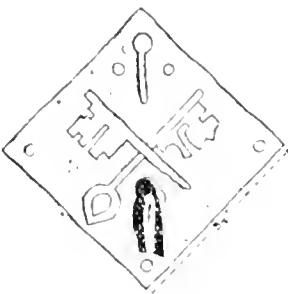
As traditions always form interesting reading, the following notes by the Revd. E. R. Gotto, M.A., vicar of Braunton, which appeared in the *North Devon Herald*, November 7th, 1907, are herewith given as a supplement. Mr. Gotto says:—

“Westcote, the county historian, says:—‘Some will have it that Braunton is to be called Brannock’s Town, and to take name from a holy man or saint, of whom, if you will be attentive to a legend, I will read you briefly what I have found in the history of this place, which saith that he was the King’s son of Calabria, a province as I take it of Naples, who arrived here in the time of King Malgo, Conanas’s son, 581 years after the time of our Redemption. Here he landed, was seated, builded a church, and preached God’s Word, and taught the people to manure their land (which was then in manner of a wilderness) by yoking harts, who mildly obeyed him, by milking the hinds, and with this plough brought timber to the place where the church now stands to build it. But to proceed further and to forbear to speak of his cow, which, being killed, chopped in pieces, and boiled in the kettle, came out whole and sound at his call: not to speak of his staff, his oak, and his man Abel, which would seem wonders. Yet all these you may see at large, lively presented to you in a fair glass window at this present, as I think, if you desire it.’

Mr. T. Wainwright—to whom we are greatly indebted for these notes—says that the above was written in 1630. The window is, alas, gone, probably smashed by some Puritan assault on the old church, but the stags’ heads are still to be seen on one of the wonderfully carved bench ends. Mr. Sabine Baring-Gould—no mean authority—says that St. Brannock, spelt Branoch, came from America, where he is completely forgotten or replaced by St. Bernard. The most probable history of St. Brannock—testa Mr. Wainwright, is that he is one of the British missionaries who crossed over from Wales to re-convert North Devon to Christianity, and possibly he may be the St. Brenach who laboured chiefly in Pembrokeshire, and by whose means the chief, Brecon, who gives his name to Breckonshire, was converted to Christianity. Tradition names a well underneath St. Brannock’s House, Braunton, as the Saint’s Holy Well, and to the right of this well are some ruins locally regarded as the ruins of St. Brannock’s Cell.”



Braunton



Clovelly.

Parish Church of All Saints.



WHO has not heard of Clovelly—the gem of the Severn Sea—the little cliff village of such vivid colouring, perched in such a wonderful fashion up the sides of its rocky combe ; with the cottages framed in creepers, and rising, one above another, “up along” its cobbled staircase street ? Absolutely unique is this “street,” and probably the most precipitous in England. Clovelly is hardly discernible from the sea until you are quite close to it, so thick is the foliage in which it is embowered. It is a very ancient seaport, for, on the Bideford road, just above the village, are the great Roman earthworks, known as “Clovelly Dikes,” of about 20 acres in extent.

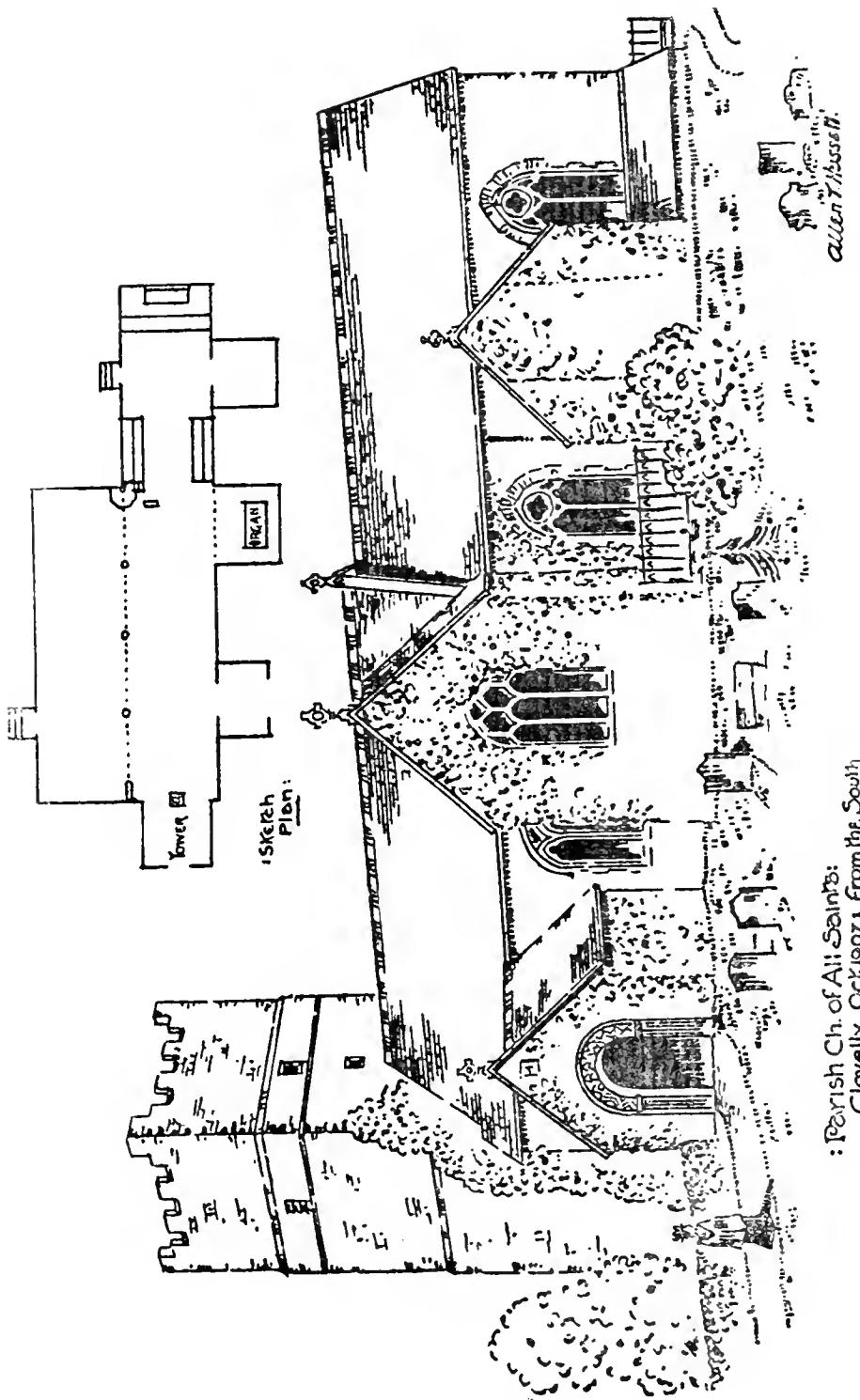
The harbour is sheltered by a stone pier, said to have been built by George Carey, then lord of the manor, in the reign of Richard II. (1377-99), and which must have been the scene of many a hand-to-hand fight—Lundy pirates and buccaneers having their share. The pier was enlarged at the beginning of the last century.

The church is situated about half a mile west of the village ; surrounded by trees, and approached from the road by a beautiful avenue, bordered with fuchsias and shrubs.

It is closely associated with the Kingsley family, for Charles Kingsley’s father was rector here for four years, and in the rectory ground is an old oak tree known as the “Kingsley Oak,” around which the children used to play. Beneath the overhanging boughs of this tree stood a summer house, and close to this a flight of rough steps can still be seen, roughly formed in wood, and cut out of the sloping bank under the tree.

Viewed from the south the church has a somewhat uncommon appearance, owing to the tower being so low in comparison with the length of the building ; but the tower is older than the bulk of the present church, and at the time that it was built probably had a timber spire, and the then existing chancel may have been shorter than now. Thus the tower would have been more in proportion with the rest of the building.

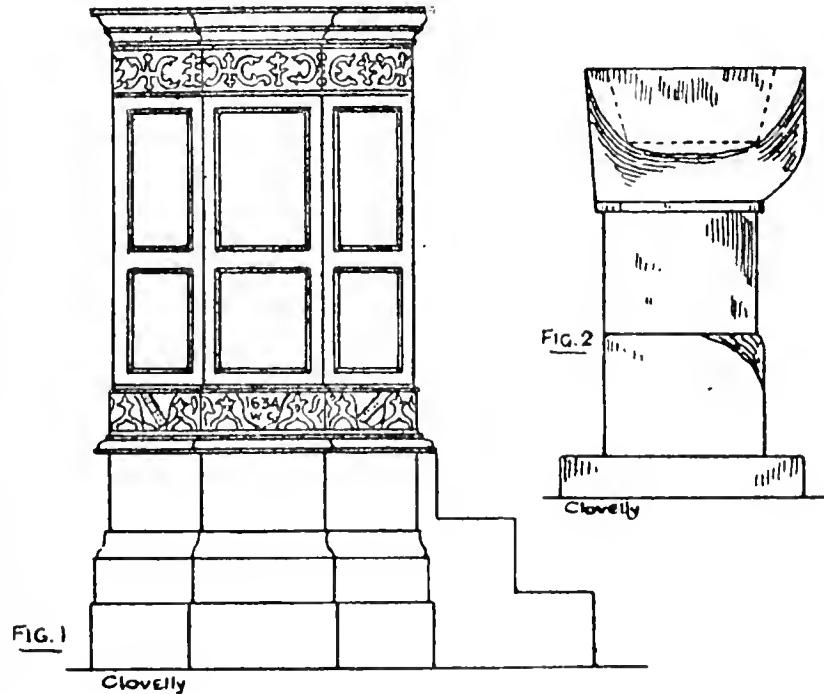
The church consists of a nave with north aisle, chancel, south transept, south porch, vestry, and western tower containing six bells. Restored in 1866, it has the appearance of being a very well kept building, and the general effect of the interior is artistic, the variety of tints in the structure and fittings blending well. The stained windows not being too large, a pleasant subdued light comes through ; and the view looking west, taking in the ground storey of the tower, with its lofty blue stone arch and piers, and the stained window beyond, is very pretty. The combined length of the nave and chancel is 84 feet 9 inches ; and the width across the nave and aisle is



31 feet 3 inches. The church has 300 sittings. The Late Decorated arched opening of the north aisle is in four bays, the arches and piers being in granite, probably obtained from Lundy Island. The piers are moulded and have curious Transitional caps and bases (fig. 4), and the arches are also moulded. The labour taken to produce these mouldings in such a material as granite must have been very great, especially with the appliances then in use. The piers are monoliths, that is, single blocks of granite, seven feet two inches in height from the top of the bases to the underside of the caps. The oldest parts of the church are the font and the stones forming the archway of the south porch. The design of the font (fig. 2) shows it to be Early Norman, if not Saxon, on the same lines as a "cushion" capital, the total height being three feet three inches from the top of the step to the top of the basin, and the width of the basin one foot ten inches across at the top. A peculiar point in connection with it is that the west face of the basin has been cut to its full depth, not upright, but sloping inwards towards the pedestal. Why it should have been cut in this way is puzzling, and one can only assume that it was made to fit at one time against a wall, or other masonry, which had a sloping face to it. Close by the font, on the floor, is the basin of an old font (fig. 5) found a few years ago at a farmyard in Hartland parish, and being purchased by Mrs. Hamlyn, of Clovelly Court, was brought to the church to save it from further desecration. It is much weather-beaten, and measures one foot in height by one foot eight inches across the top, and is probably of the same date as the font in use.

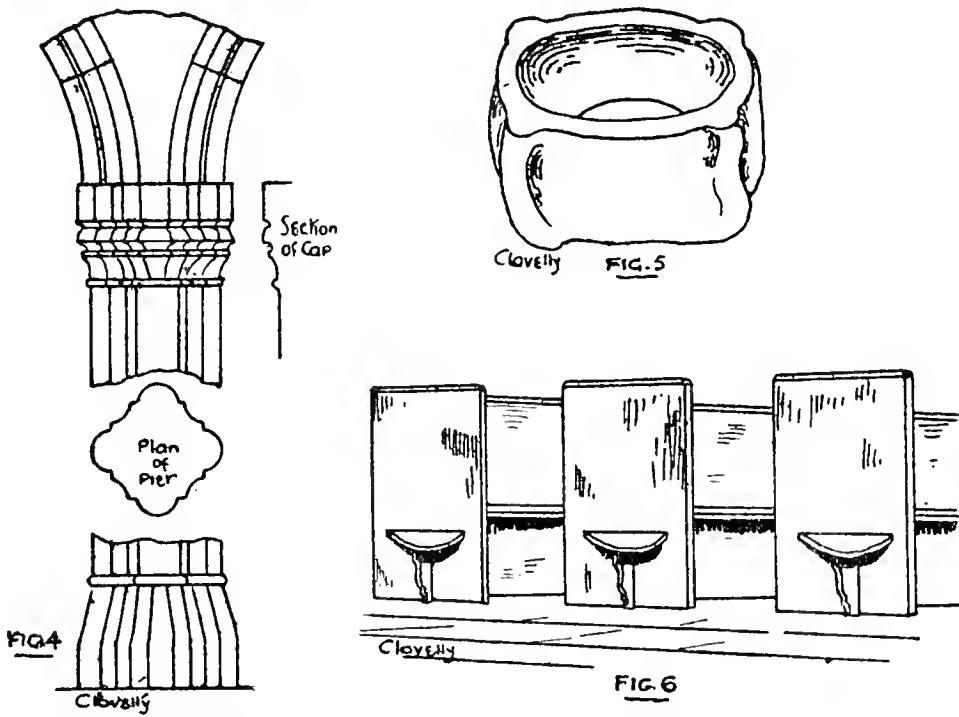
The archway of the south porch is formed with stones from an old Norman entrance (fig. 3), this archway and the font showing that a Norman church or chapel must have been here or near by. The pattern on the stones shows Early Norman zig-zag work, done in reeded lines, quite plain, but very effective. The reeds of the piers stop half-way up the cap and finish at the bottom on a chamfered base—now hidden by the step, but probably originally above the ground level.

There are no recorded dates as to the erection of the existing or any former church, therefore the opinions now advanced rest entirely on the close examination of the structure, linking it up, as near as possible, with past work. A Norman building—probably a chapel—was the first place of worship on or near the site of the present church, the only remaining traces being the font and the stones of the porch archway. This structure was followed by an Early English church, of which there is sufficient evidence in the fact that the tower is of decided Early English character—true, it could not be of plainer design, but with a spire such as it very probably had when first built, and the west window (now filled in with Perpen-



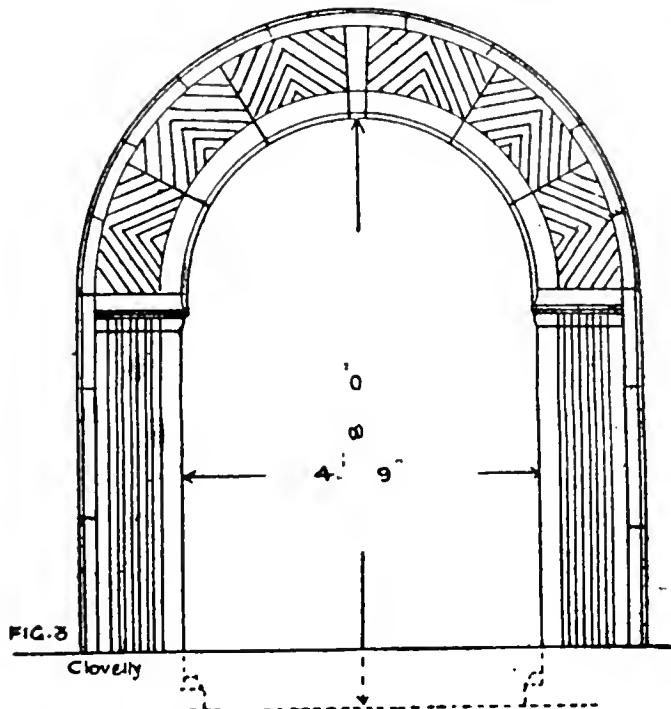
icular tracery) in Early English work, this plainness would not have been so noticeable. (In general construction and design it corresponds closely with the Early English tower of Martinhoe church, near Lynton). Its height is 50 feet from the ground to the top of the parapet.

This Early English church would probably have consisted of a nave and chancel, with the existing tower. The present nave and chancel may contain some of the walling of this period; in any case they are most probably built on the Early English foundations. During the Decorated period, perhaps about 1370 (Edward III.), the north aisle was built, as is shown by the Transitional Decorated piers and arches, and also by the details of this period showing in the old north doorway to this aisle. Some old fourteenth century work also shows in one of the chancel windows. Later on, during the Perpendicular period, the south walling of the church would have been largely rebuilt, and possibly the chancel extended; the existing roofs were put on, and Decorated or Early English tracery gave place to Perpendicular, and some new windows built or old ones enlarged. Judging from the roofs, the transept and porch are of this



period, the porch probably standing on the site of the assumed Early English church porch, and in which the old Norman stones may have been built (probably originally obtained from the north entrance of the Norman structure). Thus, Clovelly church contains old structural work from about 1070 (William I.) to about 1450 (Henry VI.). The roofs throughout are of the usual Devonian "wagon" form, open-timbered and plastered between the common rafters; the timbers being left plain, with the exception of the wall plates, which are either moulded or have dentils planted on. The roof of the aisle appears to be rather older than that of the nave. The mural monuments to members of the Cary family, are very elegant and richly decorated, and include a tablet to Will Cary, of "Westward Ho!" fame, who died in 1652 (Commonwealth), at the age of 76. The pulpit (fig. 1) is Jacobean in style, dated 1634 (Charles I.), and was given by Will Cary. It bears the Cary arms, and below the date the initials of the donor are carved.

The design is very pleasing—the pattern on the top and bottom rails contrasting



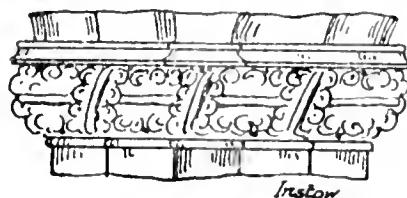
the frieze covered with an elaborate interwoven fretwork pattern. Between the columns are panels bordered with Elizabethan twisted scroll-work.

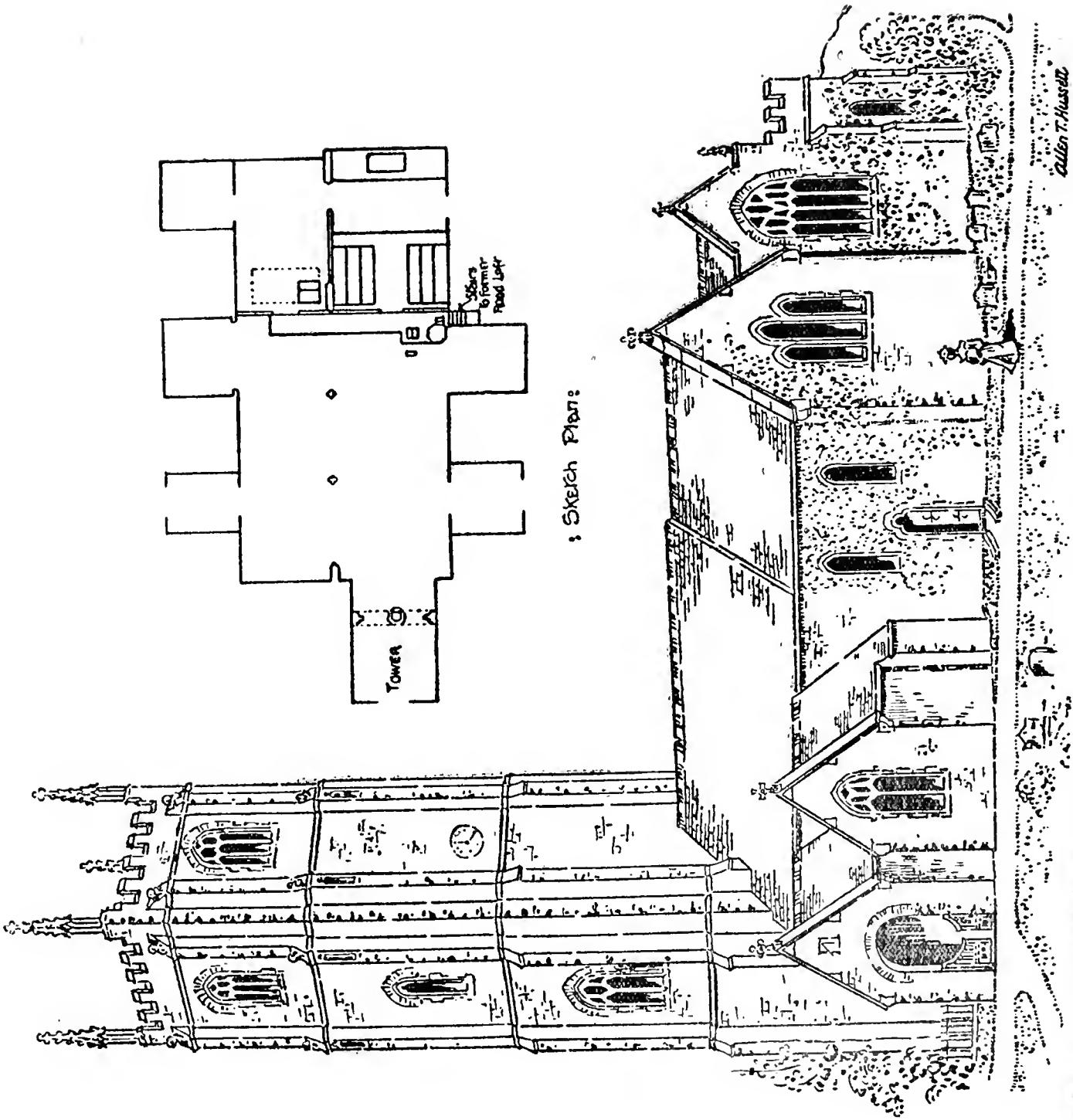
On the west wall of the chancel is a brass to Charles Kingsley. The east memorial window is to Neville H. Fane, Esq., formerly lord of the manor, the figures represented being Our Lord and some of his apostles and saints; and in the top lights are coats of arms of the Fane, Hamlyn and Williams families. The window is a fine example of modern stained glass work, as is also the west window in the ground storey of the tower—a memorial to the Rev. Wm. Harrison, a former rector of Clovelly, and representing the Virgin Mary, Elijah, and St. Andrew. A memorial tablet, near the north door, is to Sir James and Lady Hamlyn, who had the Hobby Drive at Clovelly constructed.

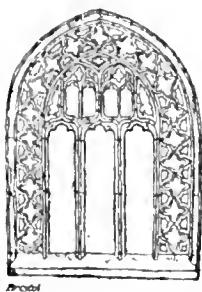
The seats are old and of oak, left quite plain, similar to those in Hartland church. A curiosity can be seen in the three little bracket seats attached to the bench-ends at the south-west of the nave (fig. 6); and opposite these, on the other side of the aisle, between the benches, there were three others—traces of the pin-holes showing. These seats were assigned to the parish apprentices, *i.e.*, pauper children, who thus sat facing each other, three each side, at a distance of about five feet. They must have been decidedly uncomfortable, as the seats are only about six inches by nine inches, and the backs of course upright.

A very beautiful specimen of Italian needlework adorns the front of the altar, the design being very full, in conventional leaf and floral pattern, done with green thread. The modern twisted iron-work for the lamps, throughout the church, is very chaste, and forms quite a distinctive feature. The woodland surroundings make a perfect setting to this old church, especially when viewed from the south.

well with the plain panelling. Resting on the floor of the chancel, within the altar rails, there is a very fine stone monument to Robert Cary (Knight), who died in 1586 (Elizabeth); it is in the Elizabethan Renaissance style, the detail of the mouldings and carving being extremely refined. Rectangular on plan, it occupies nearly the whole length of the south wall between the altar and the rails, the main portion being plain, relieved with circular columns, the caps of which are of uncommon design, consisting of a mass of conventional foliage with volutes appearing at the top. These columns support the entablature, which is finely proportioned, the mouldings being carved with acanthus leaf and other classic enrichment, and







Combe Martin.

Parish Church of St. Peter ad Vincula.



COMBE MARTIN possesses a fine church, built with ruddy stone, in a beautiful situation, about half-way up the village, on the western side of the valley. Its appearance, as a whole, strikes the observer as being more ornate than many of the ancient churches in the district—this applying more especially to the tower and the embattled north front of the building. One would naturally expect to find such a church here, for the place was formerly a market town, the charter for which is still preserved; and it was noted for its mines of silver and lead ore, which were worked during the Edwardian and Elizabethan days, and at various times up to 1875. In 1297, miners were imported into the town from the Peak district and Wales, and also, by Queen Elizabeth, from the Harz mountains, Germany. The silver cup, belonging to the corporation of London, which is still used at the annual inauguration of the lord mayors, is made of Combe Martin silver and bears the date "1593." The church is dedicated to St. Peter in chains, and consists of a nave with north aisle, chancel with north aisle, north and south transepts, north and south porches, vestry, and western tower. The combined length of the nave and chancel is 70 feet, and the width across the nave and north aisle is 34 feet 3 inches. The church was restored in 1881, at a cost of £500; the registers date from the year 1736, and there are 450 sittings. It is clear, from certain features, that an Early English church, built perhaps about 1200 (John), formerly stood on the site; in fact, Oliver de Tracey, rector of Ilfracombe, who died in 1273 (Edward I.), is said to have founded a shrine in the church; and in 1333 (Edward III.), Philip and Eleanor de Columbers founded a chantry here—probably the south transept of the existing church, in the same way that the south transept of Mortehoe Church is supposed to be the chantry founded by the then rector, William de Tracey, in 1308 (Edward II.). This Early English church, which may have been built by the first Martins (who built so many churches in South Wales), would probably have consisted of the bulk of the present nave and chancel, also the south transept. In addition, it may have had a western or northern steeple. When the fifteenth century builders took this church in hand, probably about the year 1410 (Henry IV.), they spared the chancel, the south wall of the nave, and the south transept. The tower would then have been built, the north wall of the nave and chancel opened out, and aisles built to each; also the north porch erected. Other constructional work carried out would have been the roofing throughout—probably not plastered as now, but open-timbered to the rafters. At this time the windows in the south wall of the nave and south transept would have been lancet ones, and must have been left intact, for it is recorded that they were

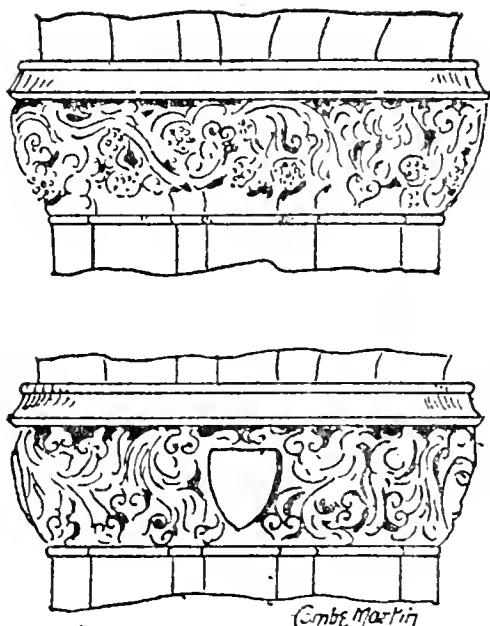


FIG. 1

subsequently widened, as they did not give enough light, and were then filled in with tracery of Perpendicular design. These are the windows as now existing. At some time between the fifteenth century operations and the widening of the nave windows, the one immediately east of the south porch was altered to a Perpendicular window, a portion of the exterior arch of which can still be seen. This window was again altered to conform with the other windows of the nave when they were enlarged. The lancet windows in the south wall of the chancel are probably restorations of the original ones. Judging from the walling, the east wall of the chancel has evidently been rebuilt, the triple-lancet window reinstated, and the chancel extended eastwards about 18 inches—done perhaps to give more room around the altar, where the door of the parclose screen comes.

Before this probable extension, the east wall

would no doubt have been in line with the east wall of the vestry, which now shows a set-back of about 18 inches.

The south porch was built in 1724 (George I.). The nave arcading is in three bays, the arches having a span of 12 feet 2 inches. The piers are set, as usual, diagonally, with half-columns at the angles, and shallow "wave" mouldings between; the half-columns and mouldings finishing under the necking of the carved caps or bands. These caps, two of which are shown in fig. 1, are excellent examples of Early Perpendicular carving, and form quite a distinct feature, and the hexagonal bases to the piers are equally good, and typical of 15th century work. The ground-storey arch of the tower, opening into the nave, is boldly moulded and of considerable height. The jamb and arch mouldings and the bases are duplicates (except that they are larger) of the corresponding parts of the nave arcading; the caps terminating the half-columns being semi-octagonal, but rather debased specimens of the usual Perpendicular octagonal caps. This is rather strange, seeing that the remaining detail is so true to the style. The archway, as a whole, although smaller, resembles in general effect and detail the celebrated noble and very lofty one of Hartland church tower, built about 1400 (Henry IV.).

The north transept has an Early Tudor four-centered arch, and its ceiling also shows work of that period. The erection of this transept would therefore date about 1480 (Edward IV.). The great fifteenth-century western tower—the finest feature of the church—is 99 feet high to the battlements, measuring 14 feet by 14 feet (interior measurement) on the ground floor; of four stages, finished with an embattled parapet, with a lofty crocketed pinnacle 12 feet high at each corner, and contains a clock and six bells. The windows which occur in the various stages lend much interest, as they are evidently the

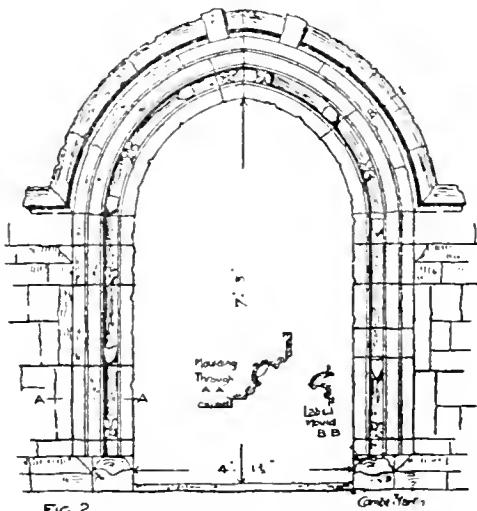


FIG. 2

original ones, appearing to be very little, if at all, interfered with or restored generally. The buttresses are of very bold projection, and continue up to just below the parapet, giving an effect of great strength. The old doorway in the west wall (formerly the west entrance to the church) is a fine specimen of Perpendicular work, and perhaps the best feature of the tower. (fig. 2.) It is of graceful outline, well proportioned, and contains the original stonework, except a part of the arch. The jambs, arch, and label are all carried out with a good series of mouldings; the central hollow mould of the jambs and arch is ornamented with the conventional four-leafed flower and small plain shields, alternating at intervals.

Sculptured work was freely introduced on the exterior of this church, and the tower buttresses have niches in them still holding carved figures—now sadly weather-worn and almost unrecognisable; and the north transept has a niche in its gable, but the figure is missing, and the north porch also had a niche, but it has been built up.

The buttresses are finished at the top with grotesque carved animal-figures, three being almost entirely decayed; but the one on the north-east buttress is still intact—no doubt owing to its comparatively sheltered position (fig. 3), and shows a bold and vigorous piece of carving, the grip of the front paws of the animal being especially noticeable in the idea of strength that it conveys. The carving measures 3 feet by 3 feet. The three other animal figures were, as far as their outline can be judged, similar in design.

The tower approaches somewhat the Somerset type; and when first erected and complete, with its sculptured work and other carving undefaced by time, must have been the leading one for beauty in North-West Devon, bearing comparison with Chittlehampton and Cullompton, further south. The north porch is sufficiently high to have contained at one time a parvise or room in its upper part, which would have been used in pre-Reformation days by the sacristan or sexton, for the safe-keeping of the church treasures.

The roofs throughout are of "wagon" form; the nave, chancel, and aisles having plastered panels with moulded ribs and carved bosses, and the north transept having an Early Tudor roof on similar lines, but having, in addition, carved floral paterae in the centre of each panel, which, together with the ribs and bosses, are painted and decorated. The south transept has a plain plastered ceiling, not panelled. The roofs of the nave, north aisle, and chancel aisle have moulded stone corbels immediately below the wall plates, which no doubt formerly carried carved wood angel-figures similar to those found in the roof of Northam and other churches.

The foundations of the nave piers and the jambs of the tower archway are exposed to view to the extent of eighteen inches in depth, showing that the floor has been



FIG. 3.



FIG. 5

Combe Martin

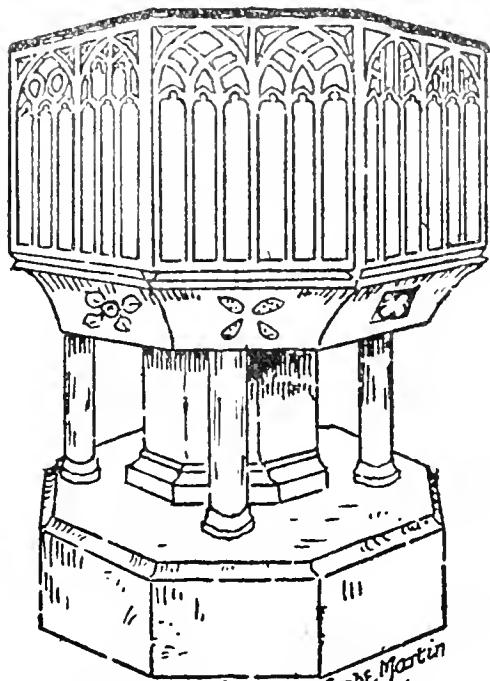


FIG. 4.

lowered to that extent. It used to be customary for burials to take place in churches, each person's grave being usually near the seat occupied during life; and the lowering of the floor may have had something to do with this fact, for possibly the remains of persons so buried were removed from beneath the church, and the floor relaid at a lower level. The font (fig. 4) is a good example of Early Perpendicular work, date about 1415 (Henry V.), and consists of an octagonal basin, stem, and base, a pretty effect being obtained by the four little outstanding pillars on which the basin partly bears. The basin is ornamented on each side, except the west, with shallow sunk tracery panels representing the various periods of Gothic tracery, from Early English to Perpendicular. The west side has been disfigured, the tracery being cut completely away. It retains, however, traces of some colouring. The coving below the basin has carved paterae worked on it—four-leaved and quatrefoil design.

A stoup (formerly a receptacle for holy water) remains in the south wall, at the right-hand of the south door on entering, and consists of a plain pointed recess, eight inches deep. The pulpit is modern, of stone, in the Decorated style. The former pulpit was a "three-decker." The reredos forms a massive and handsome feature in the Early English style, showing arcaded work with trefoil-headed arches, and pillars between, surmounted by a moulded cornice, with dog-tooth enrichment, the whole being richly decorated in colour. A carved grotesque figure of a monk holding a glass is to be found on the exterior of the church, just below the parapet on the north-west corner of the nave aisle. (fig. 5.)

The church possesses seven stained windows, the east one of the north aisle being very good, and representing the Ascension and scenes from the life of St. Peter; and in the south wall of the chancel, next the screen, is a stained window, the centre portion of which consists of genuine old glass, representing the seraphim of Isaiah vi. 2 and the wheels of Ezekiel i. 15-20.

A Perpendicular semi-octagonal pilaster or mullion can be seen in the east wall of the chancel aisle, being all that is left of a probable former stone-panelled end or reredos to this aisle, which was at one time a chantry chapel; and the extreme east pier has a niche and remains of a pedestal, both defaced, and no doubt at one time containing a carved figure. In the extreme north-east corner of the chancel aisle is a recess, 3 feet wide and

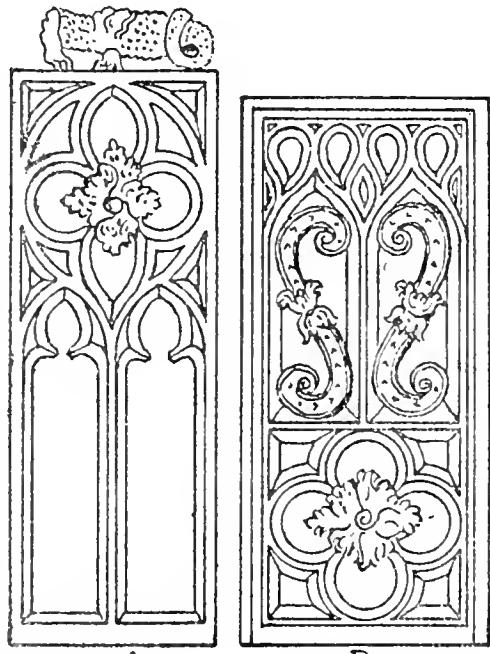


FIG. 6.

Combe Martin

7 feet high, arched with a half four-centred arch. It has been suggested that it was originally an Easter sepulchre, but this is very improbable. An Easter sepulchre is a place in which at Easter time an effigy of the Saviour is laid as if in a tomb—a custom prevalent in churches on the continent; but generally the so-called sepulchres are so placed that the worshippers can pass in a continuous stream in front. Placed in a corner as this recess is in Combe Martin church, and with the altar close to it when it was a chantry chapel, it would have been most inconveniently situated and also too narrow to have been used for the above purpose. It is possible that it was provided as a shelf, or table, for the use of the priest, and that the half-arch was a whim of the builder.

The date of the oak chancel screen is probably about 1450 (Henry VI.), and it retains the original bays and panelling. The length is 34 feet 3 inches, and the height 11 feet 2 inches. It consists of nine and a half bays, with closely reticulated tracery heads of exceptionally neat design. The panelling below contains painted figures of saints, coarsely and conventionally done, it is true, but still very picturesque and very valuable as old figure painting. They are in a remarkably good state of preservation, and one of the best series of painted screen figure-work in Devon. The upper part of the screen, above the arches, is plastered and finished with a moulded plaster cornice. This plaster work was done in 1727 (George II.)—a scheme of two churchwardens, John Peard and Timothy Harding to wit—and the initials of these gentlemen and the date can be seen duly recorded on the plastering. Before this, the portion of the screen above the arches was most probably in a ruined condition, hence the plaster-work which was considered by the worthy churchwardens a fitting reinstatement. The critical year for the parish churches was 1547 (Edward VI.), and a general spoliation of the church fittings took place then, as well as later, in Queen Elizabeth's time. Many of the rood-lofts survived the decrees of Edward VI. and Elizabeth that they should be removed, and it is possible that the one over the screen in Combe Martin church remained until the Commonwealth—1649-60—when a further and greater desecration of church property took place by the Puritans. The rood-loft stairs still remain, going up in the east wall of the south transept, but unfortunately the staircase (perhaps the most interesting feature in the church) is boarded up at its entrance; consequently no examination can be made as to its construction or the way that it terminates at the top. The stones forming the semicircular-headed doorway at the foot of the stairs appear to be those of an old doorway from the previous church, re-used here, and their position reversed; for what is now showing seems to be really the back of the stones and the rebate for the door frame, placed in this way so that the door should open outwards clear of the stairs. There is also an indication that the inner side of the arch (which would formerly have been the outer side) is more or less pointed, as a stopped moulding, rising abruptly from the springing of the arch, can be traced. To provide sufficient room for the staircase, a new east wall was built for it,

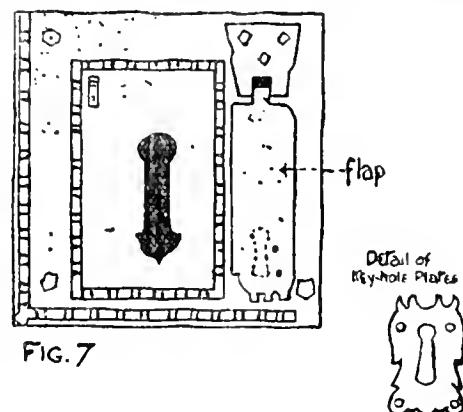


FIG. 7

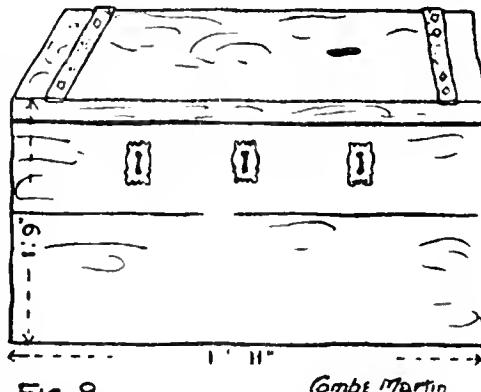


FIG. 8

Combe Martin

projecting beyond the main wall of the transept. A rather unusual feature is the canopied double-niche in the west side of the chancel pier, which breaks the continuity of the screen at this point. These two niches no doubt bore carved figures. Altars were sometimes placed on the western sides of chancel screens, but it is improbable that this double-niche formed a reredos for an altar, because the corbel-rests are continued down to the floor in an ornamental way, which would not have been the case had an altar been here, as such ornament would not have been required, seeing that it would have been hidden by the altar.

The two pairs of folding doors in the screen (one to the chancel and the other to the aisle) are quite a curiosity from the fact that it is impossible to close them, owing to the width of each pair being greater than the width of the bays in which they are hung. It is very probable, as so many believe, that the doors were constructed in this way as a symbol of the heavenly gates, which "shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." The screen gives no indication of having been compressed by any settlement of the building, and the overlap of the doors is too much for this to be a feasible explanation.

The parclose screen, between the chancel and its aisle, is a fine specimen of Perpendicular work, of later date than the chancel screen. The carving of the spandrels and cornice is exceedingly good, and modelled with much spirit, in conventional floral forms. The screen is 15 feet 9 inches long and 9 feet 2 inches high, and of five bays, sub-divided into four sections each by small mullions carrying the tracery, and the lower part consisting of panels left quite plain.

In the chancel aisle is a brass to William Hancock, a former lord of the manor, who died in 1587 (Elizabeth), and above the inscription is a coat-of-arms. A fine marble monument, in the Renaissance style, is fixed over the vestry door, and contains a half-length figure, carved in white marble. The monument is to Judith Ivatt, who died in 1634 (Charles I.), wife of Thomas Ivatt, "his majesty's principal sercher in the port of London." In the same aisle are some interesting old oak seats with carved ends, two of which are shown in fig. 6. These bench-ends are of various dates, from about 1500 to 1550, some showing Early Tudor work, and others the coming influence of the Renaissance style—for instance, see fig. 6 (b), where there is a combination of Tudor Gothic and Renaissance, the latter style showing in the scrolls in the upper panels. On the top rails of several of the bench-ends are some mutilated carvings—grotesque representations of birds and animals. An eagle and dragon can be identified, the latter shown in fig. 6 (a).

The vestry door is ancient, and is probably of 15th century date. It measures 6 feet 2 inches by 2 feet 8 inches, is studded with several rows of large square-headed nails, and bears a plain "sanctuary ring" and plate, and also a very curious "safety" lock with two key-holes (fig. 7). The door would be first locked with the large key, and then re-locked with a smaller one as a double protection. A hinged flap comes down over the smaller key-hole, presumably to hide it, and may have been fastened with a pin or other appliance in some way, as the flap is drilled with two holes near the key-hole. The south entrance door also has a sanctuary ring and plate, the latter being a duplicate in design and size of that on the vestry door of Barnstaple Parish church. The old door at the foot of the tower staircase is also evidently a 15th century door.

In the vestry is an interesting relic, viz., the "Poor Man's Box or Chest" (fig. 8). Mrs. Toms's book, "Notes on Combe Martin," gives the injunction of Queen Elizabeth in 1559 regarding such chests:—"No. xxv. Also they shall provide, and have within three months after this visitation, a strong chest with a hole in the upper part thereof, to be provided at the cost and charge of the parish, having three keys, whereof one shall remain with the parson, vicar, or curate, and the other two in the custody of the churchwardens or any other two honest men, to be appointed by the

parish from year to year, which chest you shall set and fasten in a most convenient place to the intent the parishioners should put into it their oblations and alms for their poorer neighbours."

The chest is made of oak, and has the required three key-holes. A curious old set of pewter altar-vessels and some old keys are kept in it. The book above referred to also contains an account of the agreement made between John Taylor, of Oxford, and Joshua Harris, churchwarden, as to the re-casting of the four church bells into six in 1827 :—"The tower Bells of Comb Martin was taken down and Cared to Buckland Brewer Febery 14, 1827, and cast Febery 15, 1827, by John Taylor from Oxford. Joshua Harris, Churchwardin, went down to Buckland-brewer with the bells, and had the bells cast at the time he was there, and brought agin. March 3, 1827. 4 ould bells cast into 6 bells. Joshua Harris made the agreement with John Taylor for new castin the bells for the sum of 125 pownes, findin of Everything taken Down and Caring away and bringen agin, and pouting oup new weels and clocks and brasses, and clapers, and timber, and iron, and everything excepting rops. And keep the bells in repear 12 months at his own expence. (signed) John Taylor."

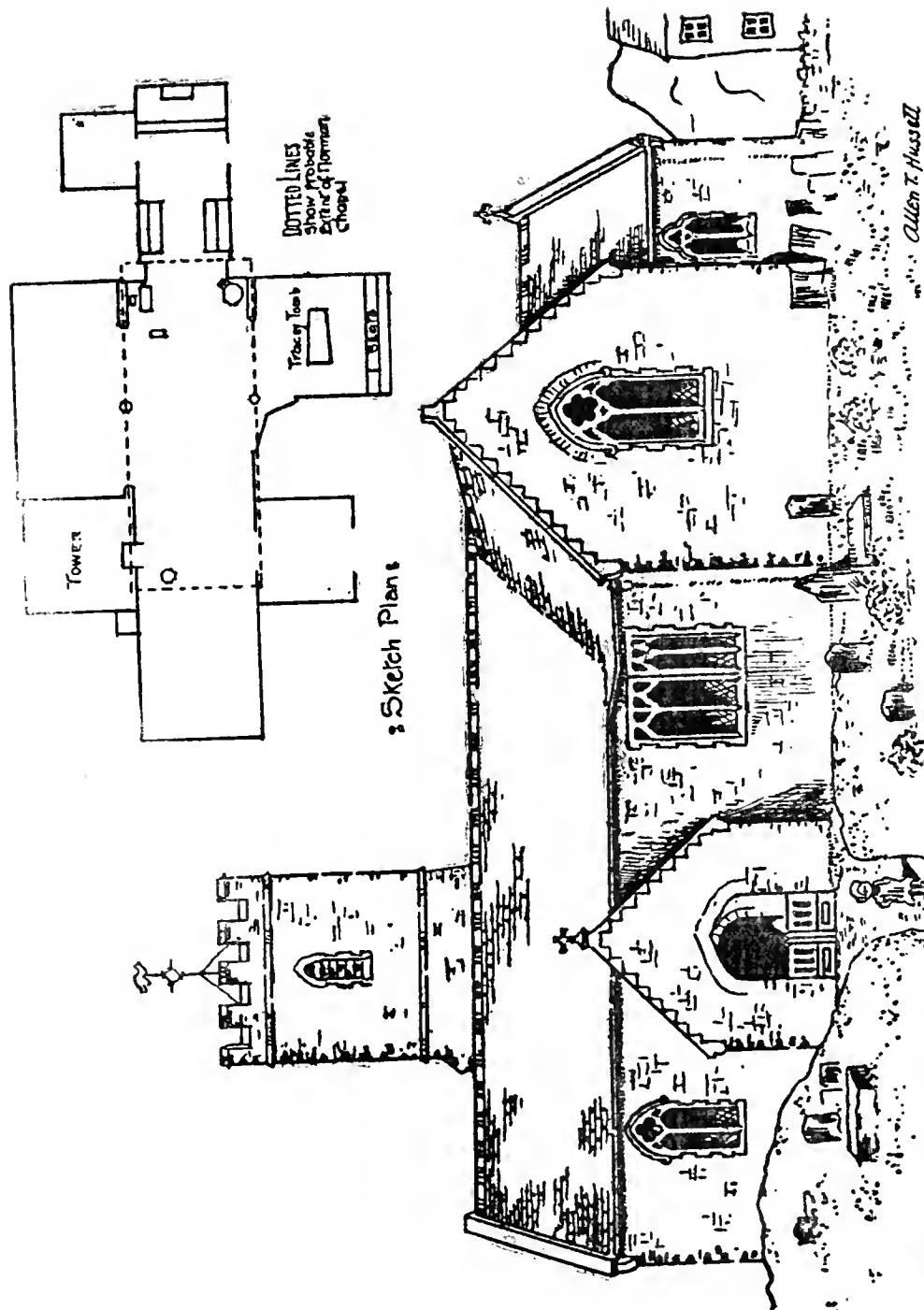
The organ was erected in 1905 as a memorial to the Rev. Humphry William Toms, M.A., rector of Combe Martin 1842-1904, and is placed in the chancel aisle. The choir and instrumentalists were at one time in a gallery at the west end of the nave, the tower archway being plastered up, and the window in the west wall of the tower filled with slates ! Two items from the churchwardens' accounts relating to the orchestra are as follows :—

	S. D.
1797. To William Willis for repairs of Musickel Instrument	15 0
1799. To William Willice repairing the Base vle	12 6

One of the best views of Combe Martin is to be obtained from the top of the church tower ; the formation of the big, sunny, and fertile valley being seen to perfection, with the long line of houses bordered on each side with strawberry and vegetable gardens ; while away to the north-east, forming a fine background, lie the Great and Little Hangman hills, bearing up to the western fringe of Exmoor.

LIST OF RECTORS.

1309—Sir William Tracy (held living for six months, and is perhaps the same as William Tracey, rector of Mortchoe, who lived about this time).	1551—Richard Gyll, M.A.
1310—Sir John de Chernebury.	1553—Nicholas Herper (Harper).
1325—Sir Lodowick do Kemmeys (Camois.)	1568—Ven. Richard Tromayne.
1353—Sir Simon Hervey.	1582—Peter Metforde, M.A.
1391—John Belle.	1595—Richard Richards, M.A.
1391-2—Richard Noreys.	1633—John Morris (or Morritt), B.A.
1402—Nicholas Stoko.	1659—John Newall (ejected and harrassed by the Puritans).
1404-5—William Goldyng.	In this interval officiated :—1674, F. A. Richards, Minister from Kentisbury ; 1676, Jno. Harder (1 year Curate, and 4 years as intruding Rector).
1405—Philip Pope.	1681—Edward Hancock.
1415—Robert Wantyng.	1708—Richard Horwood.
1416—John Langle.	1741—George Gregory, M.A.
1433—Thomas Colle.	1757—James Carrington, M.A.
1448—William Meolys (or Mulos).	1794—William Toms, M.A.
1473—William Broko.	1833—John Blackmore, B.A.
1489—Thomas Harsnapp.	1842—Humphry William Toms, M.A.
1501—William Folle.	1904—Francis Wolferstan Toms, M.A.
Edward (or Edmund) Foxe.	
1534—Richard Major.	





Morte-hoe.

Parish Church of St. Mary.



ERE, where the North Devon coast starts to trend south-westwards on to the Atlantic, stands the little village of Morte-hoe, several hundred feet above sea-level. Many a funeral knell must have been rung out from the church tower, for the village is behind a wild, but yet grand shore, with rocks like a shark's teeth ; and, standing in grim solitude, a quarter of a mile or so off Morte Point, is the treacherous "Morte Stone," known and dreaded by mariners world-wide, showing black and pointed when the tide is low, and only just covered at high-tide. The number of vessels, previous to the building of Bull Point Lighthouse, which must have struck this rock when sailing too far in, and have either gone down in deep water like a stone, or have had their ribs shattered on the cliffs in-shore, will never be known.

Kingsley says of it, "The Morte Stone, the 'Death Rock' as the Normans christened it of old, does not belie its name even now. See how, even in this calm, it hurls up the columns of spray at every wave ; and then conceive being entrapped between it and the cliffs on some blinding, whirling, winter's night, when the land is shrouded thick in clouds, and the roar of the breakers hardly preceeds by a minute the crash of your bows against the rocks."* Figure-heads of lost craft and seats made of wreckage, displayed in the village, tell their own tale.

The grey old church of St. Mary has well withstood for centuries the blast of the winter gales, and is one of the most interesting of North Devon churches, with an especially charming interior.

It consists of a nave and north aisle, chancel, south transept, south porch, vestry, and north tower, containing six bells and a clock. The registers date from the year 1721 (George I.), and there are 200 sittings. There are no known records of the structure previous to 1308 (Edward II.) but there is a tradition to the effect that a church was erected at Morte-hoe in 1170 (Henry II) by Sir William de Tracey, who lived here secluded from the world after the murder of Thomas-a-Becket at Canterbury, in that year, and in which he took a part, and the tradition is certainly strengthened by the evidences of Norman work to be found in the existing building. An examination of the church shows that a Norman structure, probably a chapel, formerly occupied a portion of the site of the present church ; for there are traces still left which bear this out, chief of which is an undoubtedly Norman archway in

*Since Kingsley wrote this, Bull Point Lighthouse, about 1 mile east of the village, has been built (in 1870). It has a fixed red light to mark the position of the stone, and also has a powerful fog-horn. Now it very seldom happens that a vessel will strike this stone.

the north wall of the nave, leading into the tower, the arch being in two semi-circular rings (a main and sub-arch, quite plain, and in characteristic bold Norman style. This archway would have been the north entrance to the little building. From certain evidences a considerable enlargement of the structure took place in the Early English period—a time of a great amount of church building throughout England—and the church then built would possibly have consisted of the present tower, and the bulk of the present nave and chancel. A reliable guide as to the date of this Early English work may be obtained from an examination of the tower, which is of very similar character in construction and design to the tower of Bideford Church, built about 1260.

To prove that the Norman building was not demolished, but altered and considerably enlarged the author advances the following opinions:—*First*, the tower is built apart from the north wall; that is to say, the south wall of the tower does not form part of the north wall of the nave, but is a wall entirely separate from it. (fig. 1.) This shows that these two walls (and consequently the tower itself) were not built at the same time, and that the nave wall is the older of the two; for if the nave wall had not been left standing then one wall (the tower wall only) would have been built, forming and being in line with the remaining parts of a new nave wall, and with a straight joint right and left where abutting against it, to allow for the settlement of the tower. *Second*, portions of the present south wall of the nave may contain Norman walling, or there is a probability that the wall is built on the Norman foundation, from the fact that the nave is so unusually narrow in proportion to its length, and which indicates an extension of the Norman chapel in length westwards, but not in width. It is doubtful if the Norman structure extended more than a very few feet west of its north entrance, and would probably have extended eastwards as far as the present chancel arch. This arch is pointed, of equilateral shape, with a quite plain soffite in one ring, and with impost mouldings in the shape of a square bead, hollow-chamfered, and probably Norman, although the usual triangular groove or quirk between the hollow and fillet is not included. Authorities differ as to the date of the arch, and it has been described as either Late or Transitional Norman. The fact, however, of the impost mouldings being of probable Norman date does not prove that the arch was built in that period, for the mouldings may be Norman ones reused. Similar instances of the reuse of old Norman material can be seen in some of the nave arcading in Ilfracombe church, built by Bishop Stapeldon in 1321, Norman neck mouldings of similar detail to those in the chancel arch of Mortehoe church being reused. Also a much later instance occurs in Northam church, in the arcading of the north aisle of the nave, built in 1593, where Norman “cushion” caps and chamfered neck-mouldings were reused.

In all probability the arch was constructed when the Late 13th century works were carried out, taking the place of a narrow and low semi-circular Norman arch—that is, assuming the Norman building possessed a chancel. It resembles in general appearance the arches erected a few years later in Braunton and Westdown churches, and elsewhere, in the Early Decorated period.

The first known reference to Mortehoe church occurs in the Bishops' Registers at Exeter, wherein it is stated that in 1308 (Edward II.), the then rector, Sir William de Tracey, founded a chantry here, dedicated to SS. Mary Magdalen and

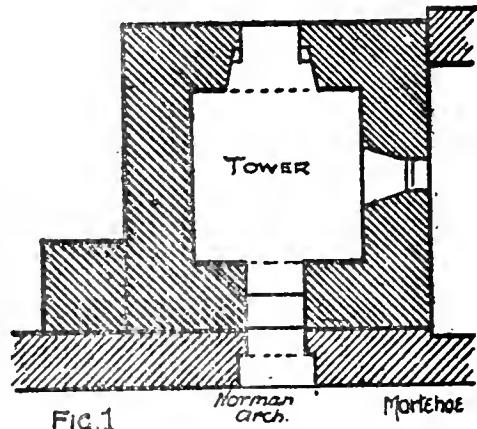


FIG. 1

St. Catherine. He died in 1322, and is said to be buried in the south transept. He was probably the William de Tracey who held the living of Combe Martin for six months in 1308, and who was a relation of Sir William Martin, of that place. (The tomb in the transept bears the Martin arms.) The existence of this old tomb goes a long way to prove that the rector was buried in this part of the church, and the transept would be the chantry founded by him; for there are no traces of a north transept or other portion of the church which may have been a chantry. The tomb (fig. 2) is made up of a large granite inscription slab, which has converging sides, and measures 6 feet 9 inches in length, the width at the top end being 3 feet, and at the bottom end 2 feet 2 inches. It is seven inches thick, with sloping edges. An inscription is incised on the top in Norman-French, in Lombardic characters, running around the west end and south side, and reads:—

SYRE AME DE TRAC .

. ALME EYT MERCY.

The inscription as originally cut may have borne the translation: "Sir William de Tracey, may God have mercy on his soul." "Syre" was a title given to all priests,

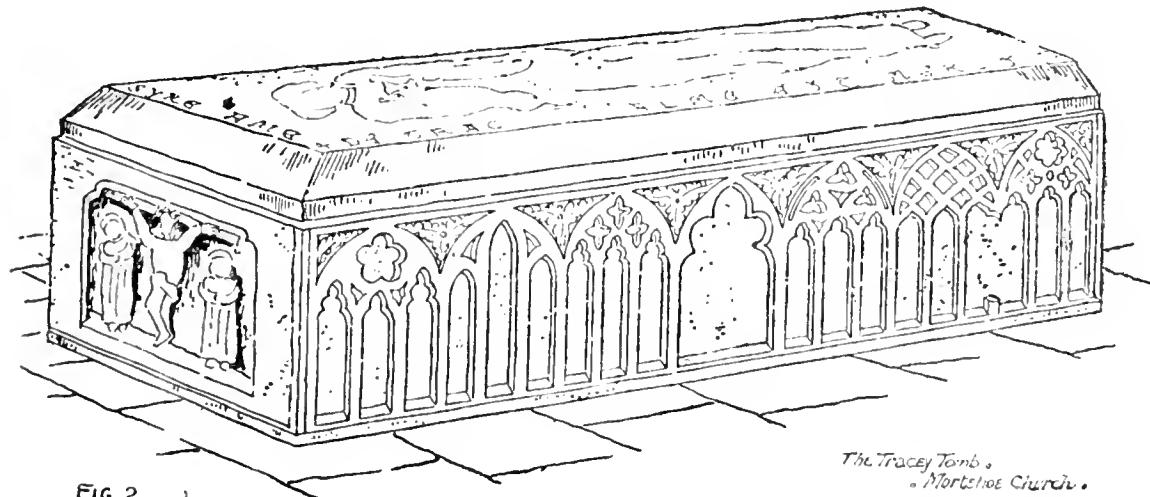


FIG. 2

and is the Latin "dominus." A roughly depicted figure of a priest in full vestments, holding a chalice, is incised on the slab, which is considerably worn away. (fig. 3.) It is mounted on a Hamhill stone base, the west end having a carved representation of the Crucifixion; the north side has carved figures, supposed to be SS. Mary Magdalene and Catherine, and the before mentioned Martin arms; and the south side has a striking series of panels, showing deeply cut Gothic tracery, in Early English and Decorated designs. A part of this patch-work base is possibly from a small, but elaborate, high-altar, which may have been erected in the chantry chapel by its founder, Sir William de Tracey, in 1308 (the Decorated period). He was no doubt a descendant of the Traceys, who are known to have held land at Mortehoe and neighbourhood. One of his ancestors would very possibly have been the knight, Sir William de Tracey—one of the four who murdered Thomas-à-Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1170—and there is some difference of opinion as to whether the tomb does not belong to this knight rather than to his namesake the rector. The names are the same, and there is no date on the inscription slab, but the figure of the priest incised on it establishes the fact that it must be the rector's body which was deposited below, or near it, and not that of the adventurous knight.

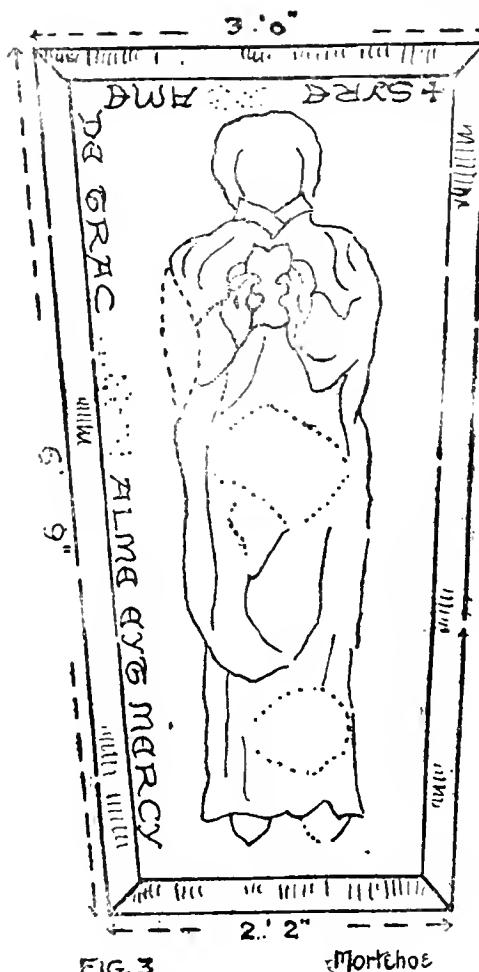


FIG. 3

century chapels. The eastern respond of the arcading and the soffites of the arches are panelled, and there is also groined work springing from the corner window and the octagonal intermediate pier. The mouldings of the arches and the cap of the pier are in a very debased Gothic style, not even showing the purity of Tudor work, but of quite Classic character, roughly done. The pier is also without a proper moulded base. The base consists of a plain octagonal block. The four-light corner window (accurately restored in 1885) which was built in conjunction with the arcading, has also mouldings of a similar character to those of the arcading. On the octagonal pier the initial letters and date "I.B. 1618" are cut, and above these the initials "R.K." appear. From the foregoing particulars it is very probable that the arcading and window were constructed in 1618 (James I.)—the date on the pier. The poorness of the detail does not warrant an earlier date; and where these Early Decorated transeptal chapels occur in North Devon churches it is noticeable that the original plain arches remain—not having been destroyed by the 15th century builders. This substantiates the idea that the arcading, etc., is not of earlier date than that cut on the pier, although the design is on Tudor lines. The character of the work shows it to be just such as would be erected in the Early 17th century, when Gothic architecture had reached a very decadent state. It may be mentioned that the arcading of the north aisle in Northam Church bears the date of its erection—(1593)—in a similar way. The altar (a Decorated one) used by the chantry priest in the chapel (now the transept), was probably removed about the middle of the 16th century, and part of the materials, as before conjectured, used as a base or support

It has been held that if the tomb were the rector's, then the inscription being for a priest would have been in Latin. But this is not always the case, and instances can be cited to the contrary—for example, in Navenby (Lincs.) church there is the tomb of a priest, and the inscription is in Norman-French.

The author gives the following theories as to the history of the transept and its tomb:—The transept, as before mentioned, was erected as a chantry chapel by Sir William de Tracey, the then rector, in 1308. When the rector died, in 1322, he was buried in the transept, and the slab rested either immediately on the floor over the burial place, or on a plain low base. It is improbable that it was ever placed upright against one of the walls, as the wording at the top would in that case have been upside-down, and therefore unreadable. The altar possibly continued until the suppression of secondary altars between Henry VIII.'s and Elizabeth's reign; or if it survived their decrees, it may have been in existence up to the Commonwealth and the Puritan days, 1649-60.

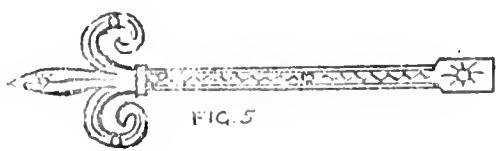
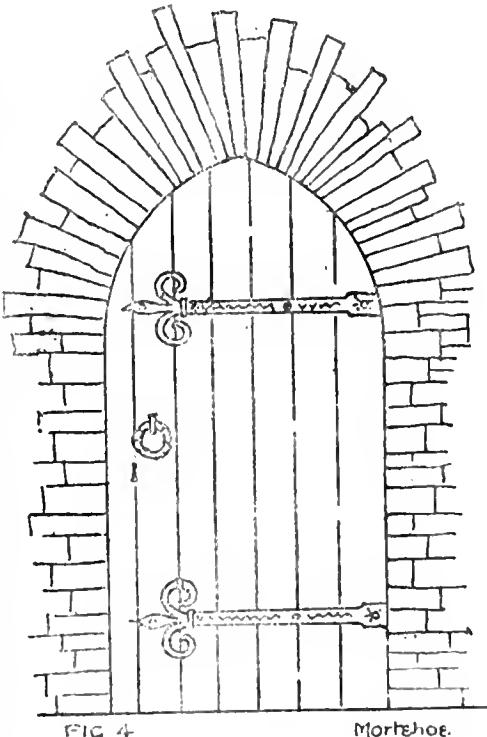
The transept is divided from the nave by free-stone arcading, in two unequal bays, the arches being four-centred and rising from a slender octagonal pier. The original transept arch would have been an Early Decorated equilateral shaped arch, such as may be seen in most of the churches containing these 14th

for the Tracey slab as it now stands ; for the tomb could not have occupied its present position until the altar had been taken down, because it would of course have been in the way of the officiating priest, standing so near as it does to the east wall. The cutting away of the junction of the transept west wall and the nave wall by the insertion of the corner window, was evidently done to give a better view of the nave to worshippers in the transept, which in the case of this church would have been particularly essential, owing to the nave being so long and narrow.

The tower is 44 feet in height to the top of the battlements. The inside measurement of each side on the ground story is 8 feet 8 inches, and the walls are 3 feet 5 inches in thickness, slightly battering on this storey. The south side would appear to have been rebuilt, or refaced, at the same time that the buttress was built, and made thicker than the other sides ; the extra thickness resting on the nave wall, and causing the east window of the belfry stage to be north of the centre line.

The arch of the tower north doorway is built in a peculiar way, with very long local stones, alternating with shorter ones, forming a very strong arch. (fig. 4.) The door, which appears to be modern, has a pair of old wrought iron hinges of elegant Early English design. (fig. 5.)

The chancel floor is on the same level as that of the nave, but formerly it may have been higher by one step, the bases of the piers of the north aisle indicating this, as they are nearly buried by the floor, and should really show at least six or seven inches more in depth. The details of the roof, and the depressed four-centred arches of the arcading, point to the north aisle having been built in the Tudor period, date about 1540 (Henry VIII.). The mouldings and carving of the roof are coarse, but the arcading is very cleverly built in thin local grey stone, the piers being octagonal, with square bases, chamfered at the angles, and the arches are semi-octagonal. The west end of the aisle shows walling of bright blue and grey tints, the plaster having been removed in 1885, and so exposing the stone to view. From this, some idea of how the tower looked when first erected can be obtained, for when the aisle was built, this wall (really the east wall of the tower) was no doubt scraped and repointed, after having been exposed to the weather for 240 years or so. The inner doorway of the south porch has a four-centred arch in local stone on its inner side, and a semi-circular one on the outer side. The stones forming the latter arch, with its jambs, are probably from an old Norman door or window. Judging from the inner arch and from the mouldings of the roof rib at the top of the cradle roof, this porch was built at about the same time as the north aisle. The nave roof is a splendid specimen in its way of a 15th century oak open-timbered cradle roof, in a fine state of preservation. It has no ribbed and bossed panelling usually found in Devonian roofs of that period, but simply a longitudinal moulded top rib, which gives a very striking effect of length to the roof. The detail of the transept



roof indicates that it was erected at about the same date as the arcading. It is a cradle roof with a panelled and plastered ceiling, having roughly carved bosses at the intersection of the ribs. The chancel roof is modern, of steep pitch, open-timbered, with braced rafters and longitudinal rib. The old oak seating or benches in the nave, with carved ends, are very good examples of West-country workmanship. The detail of the bench-ends, shows them to be of late Tudor date, about 1540 (Henry VIII.) which can be seen by the costume of the gentleman (or part of him) shown in fig. 8. There are 48 carved bench-ends, and they were restored and some partly renewed when the church was restored in 1859. Many bear the initials of the carvers or donors; others have the emblems of the Crucifixion, and some have grotesque sea monsters carved on them. (fig. 7.) The second bench-end east of the south door has a curious representation of what is believed to be the head of John the Baptist on one panel, and his prison on the other—the latter figure being a copy of one in Braunton Church. (fig. 6.) The pulpit is a modern stone one in the Decorated style. The font also is modern. The former pulpit stood at one time against the south wall, just west of the corner window, and at that time there was a west gallery,



FIG. 6

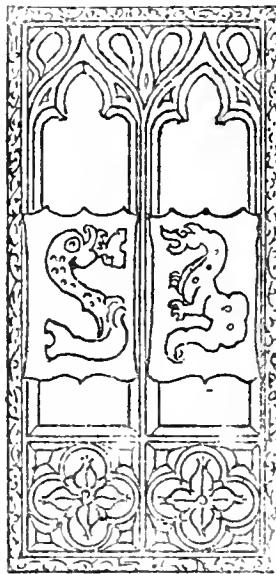


FIG. 7



FIG. 8 Mortehoe

and the seats were old-fashioned high-backed pews. The church contains several stained glass windows, the best, perhaps, being that in the east wall of the north aisle. It is a two-light window, being a copy of a portion of the large five-light memorial window to Lord Frederick Cavendish in St. Margaret's church, Westminster, and designed by Mr. Henry Holiday. It was erected to the memory of the Rev. John Derby Ness, who was for 58 years curate and vicar of Mortehoe, and who died in 1884, and also to his wife Elizabeth Jane. Erected by their only daughter, it represents Our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, and also on His way to Calvary. The three-light east window of the chancel is a very charming piece of work, in well graded tints, the subject being Our Lord in the boat on the Sea of Galilee—a memorial to John Derby Rowe Ness, who died in 1857, at the age of 18, and erected by his parents. In the transept is an elaborate mural monument of good design, in the Renaissance style, to Mary Heddon, of Campscott, who died in 1889, aged 22. The inscription states that "her parents to perpetuate her memory have dedicated a sum of £1,500, the income of which is to be distributed annually on the 27th day of October among the labouring poor of the parish of Mortehoe."

Facing the nave, on the wall at the east end of the aisle arcading, is a monument (fig. 9) to "Mary, wife of Thomas Newell, of Easswell, Gentn, and daughter of John Cuteliff, of Damage, Esquire, who died the 9th day of May, 1700, aged 38; and also to Mr. Thomas Newell, Gentn, who died Nov. 20th, aged 61." (No year is mentioned, but presumably it is 1700.) It is of good Renaissance design, 5 feet in height, by 3 feet 6 inches in width, and is decorated with colour and gilding. The handsome mosaic containing figures of angels over the chancel arch, on the nave side, was designed by Mr. Selwyn Image, and was erected by Dr. G. B. Longstaff, of Mortehoe, in memory of his wife, who died in 1903. The beautiful red altar frontal was the work of this lady.

Two of the church bells are of exceptional age, and bear Latin inscriptions. Expert opinion (Ellacombe) says that they were cast by Robert Newton, of Exeter, about 1430 (Henry VI.).

The Rev. J. F. Chanter, the well known authority on church plate, describes that at Mortehoe church as follows:—"Chalice. Usual Elizabethan style, with foliated band, though the stem is somewhat shorter than the usual type and knob is varied; height 6 inches; bowl 4 ins. diameter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. deep. Marks: Usual marks of T. Matthew, except that "T" is omitted and ornament stamped twice; but in middle of bowl there are some old hall marks, almost obliterated by hammer.

"Chalice cover. Elizabethan, with band $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter; 1 inch high; button $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter. Marks: Three usual marks of T. Matthew, Exeter, 1565 to 1608.

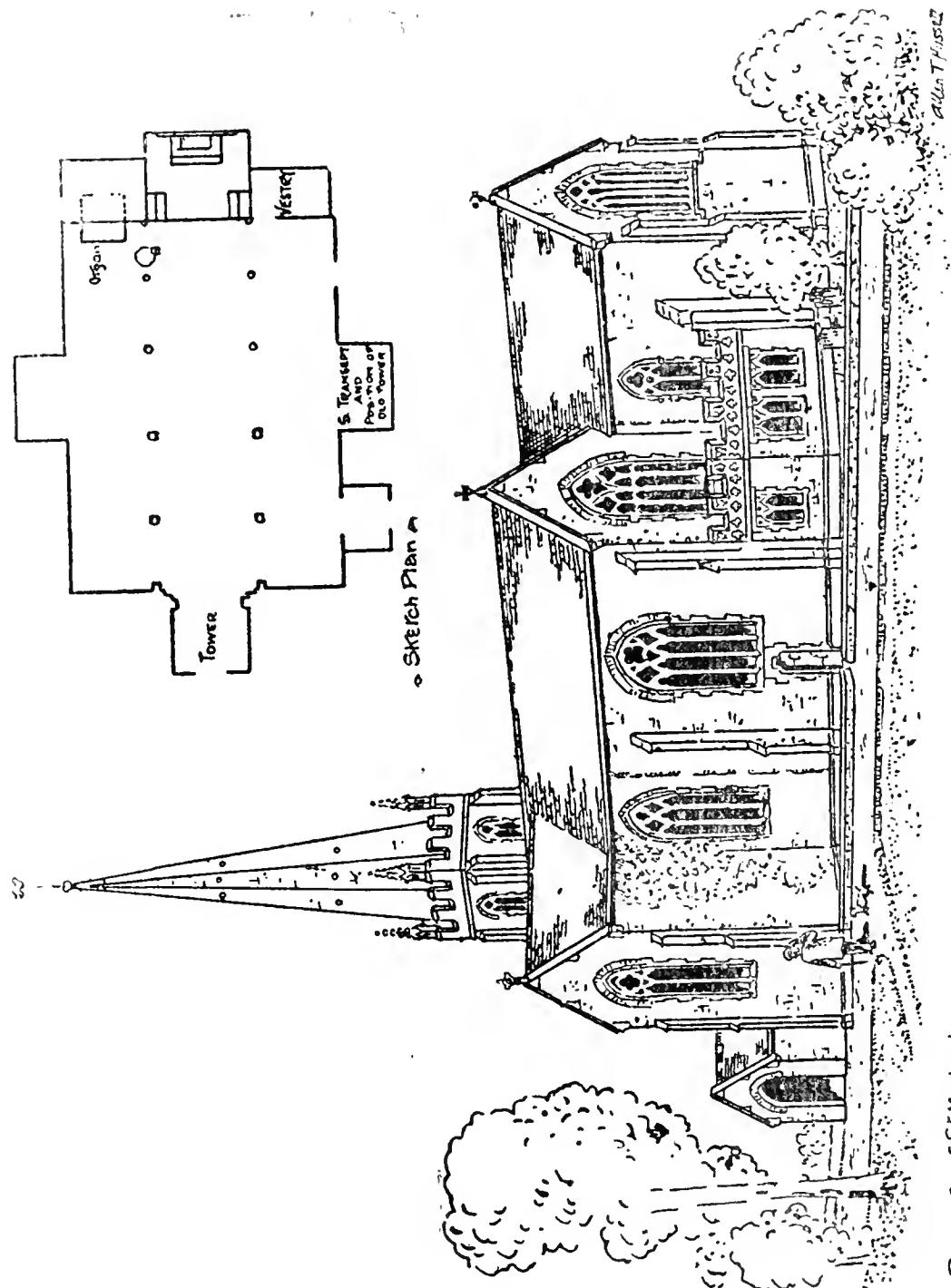
"Paten. Plain on stand, very rude hammered work; the stand probably a later addition, very roughly soldered on. No marks. Inscription (pricked letters) I x M., Vicor (M.A.) (P.P.)

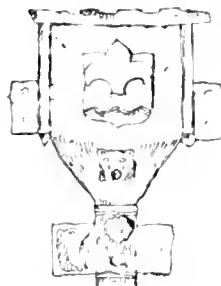
To conclude, one may say that the most striking feature about this church is the fine effect produced by the low height of the nave and its narrowness in comparison with its length; and this is the more marked as there are no aisles, with the exception of the short north aisle. The total length of the church (inside measurement) is 83 feet; the nave being 58 feet long by only 15 feet 4 inches in width. It has only one public entrance, viz., the south entrance—which is unusual for a church of this size. Not having been restored to any great extent, the church has well retained its early characteristics.



FIG. 9







Great Torrington.

Parish Church of St. Michael.

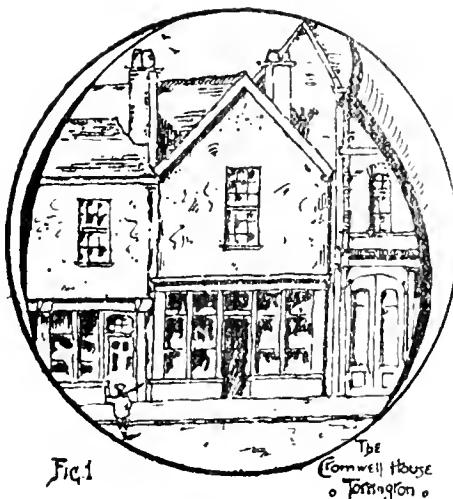


To reach Great Torrington (commonly known as Torrington) church means an ascent from the railway station of 300 feet. This is the town's altitude above the river; but the climb is well repaid, for the country around is one of the beauty-spots of North Devon. Viewed from the south the town is said to resemble Jerusalem. The great green hill on which it is built is bordered at its base by the winding river Torridge, with beautifully wooded ravines in the background. Castle Hill marks the site of The Castle, rebuilt by Richard de Merton in 1340 (Edward III.), and it is from here that the wide-reaching grandeur of the landscape can best be seen—even the conical peak of Yes Tor, on Dartmoor, 18 miles to the south, showing up quite distinctly—given a clear day. Torrington is called on the map *Great* Torrington, to distinguish it from Little Torrington—3 miles distant, and is a very ancient place; a market town of Saxon times, and having its fair as early as 1226 (Henry III.).

The borough sent members to Parliament in the reigns of Edward I., II., and III., and has seen some fighting during the 17th century Civil War.

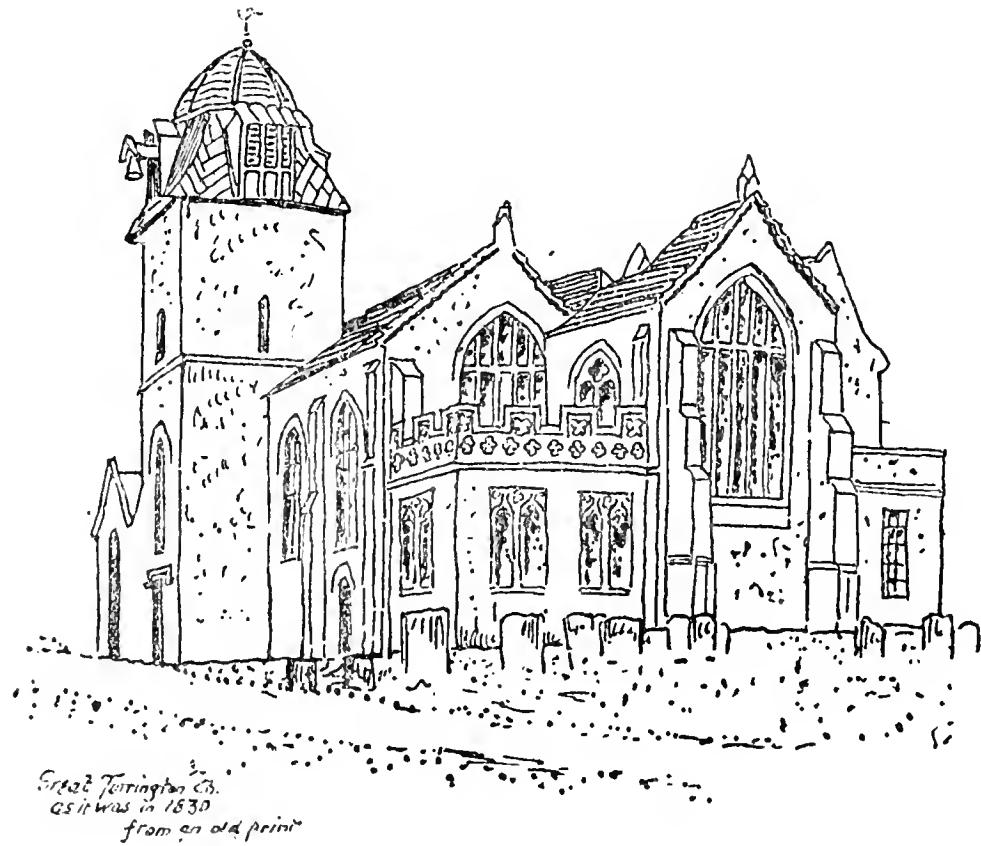
Margaret, Countess of Richmond, and mother of Henry VII. (1485-1509), lived for some time in the town. Risdon, the Devonshire historian, who was born at St. Giles-in-the-Wood, 3 miles from Torrington, states that Margaret, “pitying the long path the pastor had from home to church, gave him and his successors the land and manor house adjoining.”

The existing church can hardly be regarded as very ancient, for it was built in 1651 (The Commonwealth), but it is of considerable interest, because the church which preceded it was blown up during the battle that took place at Torrington between the Royalist and Parliamentary forces in the Civil War in 1645 (Charles I.), the greater portion being destroyed; and also because it is an example—not very common in Devon—of a complete 17th century country church, with the exception of the comparatively small amount of modern additions, and the incorporated parts of the former church which survived the explosion. In order to understand the present church properly, it will be necessary to relate, as far as old records will permit, some of the events just preceding its erection, and also to give some account of the former church. Such records are contained in the book “A few pages of Great Torrington history, 1642-1646,” being the published lecture given some years ago by Mr. George M. Doe, the Town Clerk of Torrington. It states that “On the 6th February, 1645, the Royalist forces, under Lord Hopton, left Launceston and reached Torrington on the 10th of the same month. Rumours of this soon reached Fairfax, the General of the Parliamentary forces, who was before



Exeter ; upon which he abandoned the seige of that city, and on the 14th February, left Crediton with an army consisting of nearly 10,000 men, and reached Chulmleigh the same day. From there he advanced to Torrington, by way of Stevenstone, on the night of the 16th February ; and, after a severe action, the Royalists were defeated and many prisoners taken, some of whom were confined in the church, where 80 barrels of gunpowder had been stored by the Royalists." The evidence as to whether the powder was wilfully or accidentally fired is conflicting. Joshua Sprigge, the chaplain of Fairfax, in his narrative of the battle at Torrington, says that "The magazine of near 80 barrels of powder, which the Lord Hopton had in the church, was fired by a desperate villian, one Watts, whom the enemy had hired for the purpose. Lead, stones, timber, and iron work were blown up into the air and scattered all over the town and fields about it." Fairfax, however, in his official account of the battle, says that "80 barrels, as reported, of powder were blown up purposely by a prisoner, or accidentally by a soldier, and the church was quite blown up, houses shaken and shattered, and stones, timber, etc., carried up very high." Torrington can boast of having had Cromwell in its midst, for Sprigge, in his account of the precautions taken before the battle, says that "The General (Fairfax) and Lieutenant-General (Cromwell) went from Master Roll's house to see the guards accordingly set." Fig. 1 is a sketch of the gabled

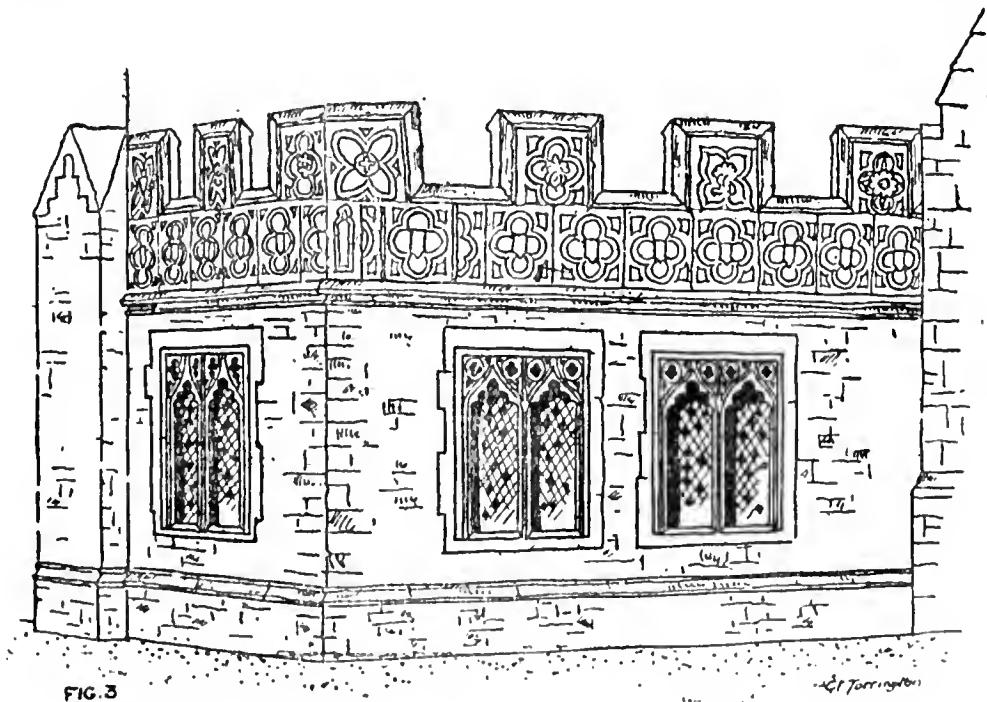
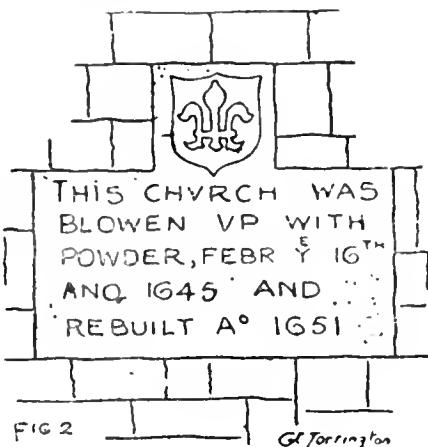
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house in Torrington (now much modernised), which is reputed to be the one where Cromwell lodged. It is situated opposite the Town Hall.

As to the amount of damage done to the church, Sprigge does not say it was completely destroyed. Fairfax says it was "quite blown up." It may, however, be safely conjectured that the latter's report, which was an official one, was most probably sent up immediately after the action, in the excitement of the moment, without a very close examination of the ruins.

In the letterpress part of an old book entitled "Devonshire Illustrated with a Series of Views," published in 1832, and written by Messrs. J. Britton and E. W. Brayley, Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries, it is stated, regarding the explosion in Torrington church, that "All the western part of the church was destroyed, but the chancel, with an adjoining chapel, and a southern tower, escaped, though not without much damage." This statement is evidently right, for an examination of the present church at once discloses the old surviving parts referred to. In the same book it is also mentioned that "In November, 1830, the old tower, which had long been unsafe, was begun to be pulled down; and a new tower, which is now in progress, was commenced at the western end of the church, to be surmounted by an octagonal spire." A sketch is here given, based on an engraving in the book, showing the present church from the S.E. as it was in 1830, the old southern tower just before it was pulled down, and also the vestry, S.E. of the chancel. A clue as to the style of the former church is afforded by a study of the old tower shown in this valuable engraving. It is stated that the upper part of the spire was blown down by a hurricane and falling through the roof did considerable damage. This, then, would account for the curious conical-looking termination to the spire. Before its downfall it was a "broach" spire, lead-covered. This is very clearly shown in



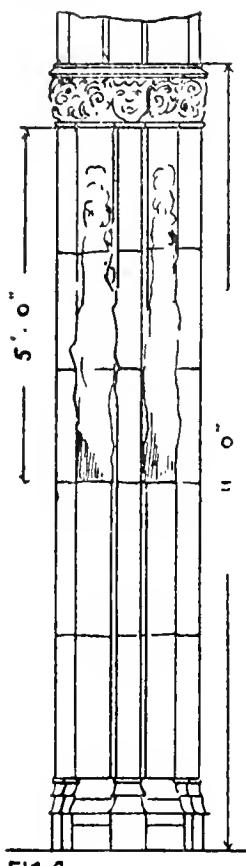


FIG. 4



PLAN

the engraving, where the lead-covered angle-broaches are seen, and also by the large spire-lights. This spire was thus originally very similar to the fine lead-covered broach spire of Barnstaple parish church, built about 1316, and was probably contemporary with it, which indicates that the former church of Torrington was erected at about that date (Early Decorated period), and was enlarged in the 15th century.

To pass on to the description of the existing church, the first thing to note is the old stone, with inscription, built in on the outside of the west wall of the south transept, and giving the date of the blowing-up of the church and its rebuilding. (fig. 2.) On entering the church one is immediately struck with the air of brightness and good colour-contrast which it possesses, and also with its well proportioned and lofty nave and aisles. It is obvious that in spite of the decadence in Gothic architecture which set in during and after the 15th century, the 17th century builders of this church succeeded in erecting a structure which will compare well with many of the more ancient of Devon churches. It is principally in the Decorated or 14th century style, and consists of a chancel, nave with north and south aisles, north and south transepts, south porch, vestry, organ chamber, and a western steeple. Internally it measures 106 feet 7 inches from the west end of the nave to the east end of the chancel, and the combined width of the nave and the two aisles is 61 feet 5 inches. It was restored in 1864, and has 1,200 sittings. The registers date from the year 1616 (James I.), and contain a number of entries relating to the burials of officers and soldiers killed during the Civil War. It may be of interest to relate that at the restoration a large quantity of lead from the old church, which had run in a molten state under the floor, was found when the floor was removed, and also a couple of shillings of the reign of

Charles I. One of these coins is in the possession of Mr. Doe.

The parts of the former church which survived the explosion and are contained in the present church, are, as far as can be ascertained by an examination of the structure, as follow:—The vestry (the most interesting part of the church) situated immediately east of the south aisle, and of which a detailed sketch is given in fig. 3. It is of Early Tudor work, probably about 1485 (Henry VII.), and has three two-light square-headed traceried windows, surmounted with a frieze and embattled parapet; the former having a series of quatre-foil panels, with centre shields, and the latter having foliated and regular quatre-foils, with centre carved decoration, in the form of Tudor rose and other floral carving. This beautiful Tudor work, if it was not the vestry in the old church, may either have been a part of the east end of a south aisle, or connected with, or have been part of, a possible south chapel. Its richness of detail rather points to the latter conclusion.

The seven Perpendicular moulded piers, with carved caps carrying the moulded arches, forming

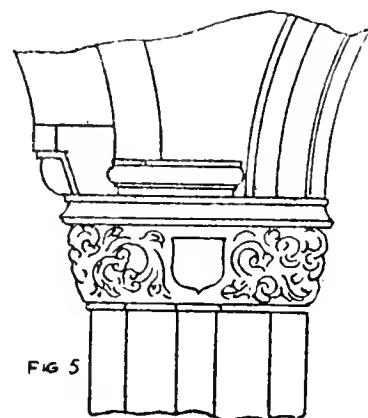


FIG 5

the nave arcading (from about the middle of the nave, back to the chancel), are evidently constructed principally of the remains of the arcading from the old church ; for, apart from the look of age which they possess, there is every reason to suppose that these elaborately moulded piers, etc.—most of them blown down or disturbed, but not necessarily damaged to such an extent as to render them (or portions of them) unfit for re-use—would, with this object in view, have been carefully preserved by the inhabitants, who would have recognised the value of such material, and have foreseen that the church would be rebuilt. The

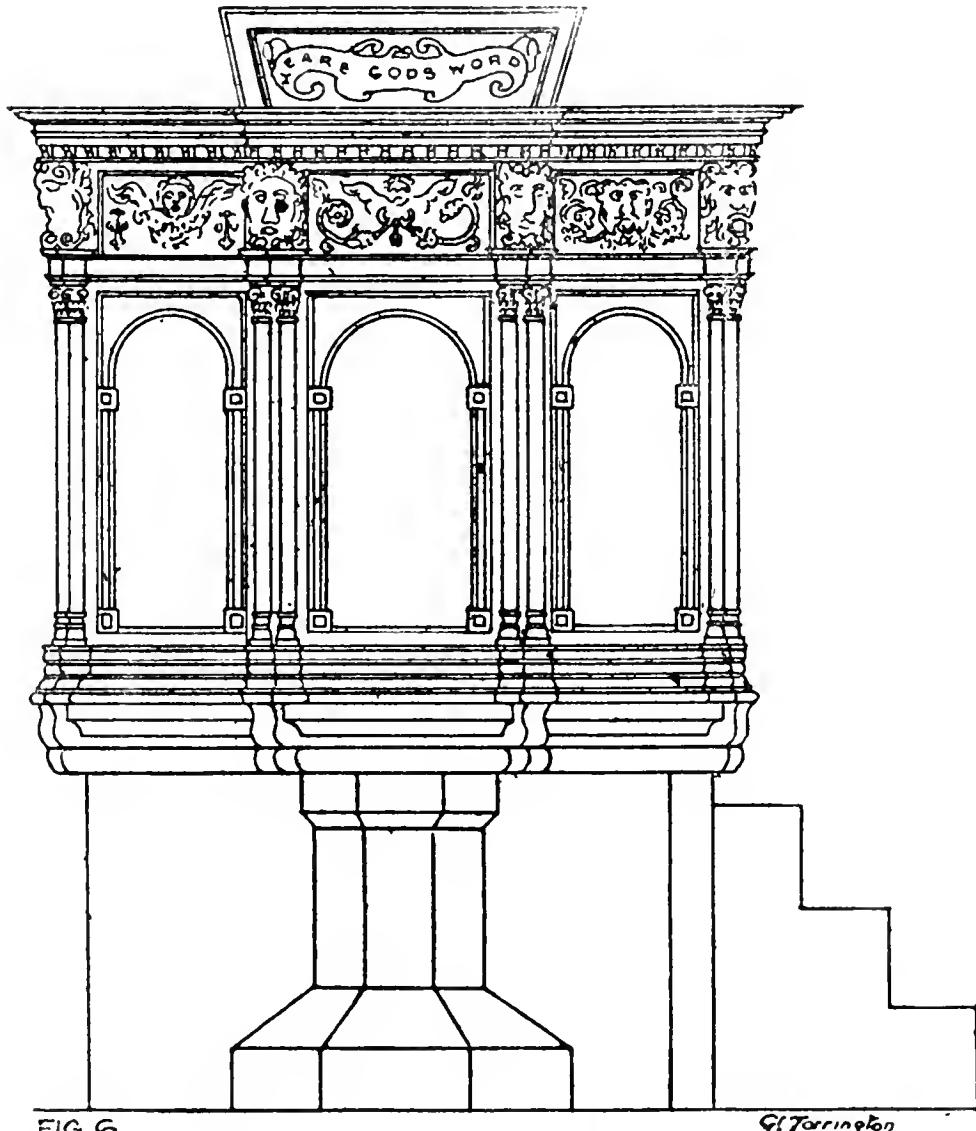


FIG. 6

G. Tarrington

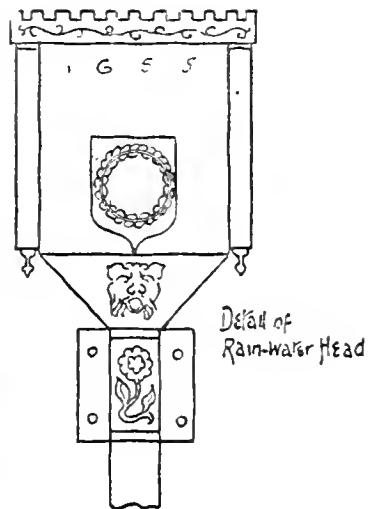
extreme eastern bay of the south aisle is probably the original one of the former church, undisturbed ; that is, it probably never fell when the explosion occurred ; for it is of smaller span than the remaining bays, and also the arch is lower. On the piers of this bay are traces of niches (fig. 4), which would originally have held carved figures. The canopies and other parts of the niches have been hacked away, the tool marks showing on the stonework—whether done in the Reformation time, or later, during the Puritan days, will probably never be known. One can only suggest that it could only have been the Puritans, with their very rigorous

desecration of the churches, who would have troubled to hack away the harmless canopies as well as remove the figures. The remaining parts of the former church, other than the foregoing, would probably be the foundation of the south transept, and a part of the chancel foundation and walling. As before mentioned, the tower survived the explosion, although much shaken ; and when the church was rebuilt, the tower was no doubt repaired. In 1830, however, it had become so dilapidated that it was taken down, and the south transept built — judging from the size and shape — on its foundations. If the north transept was also built at this time, it was made as a duplicate of the south transept on plan. If built in 1651, when the general rebuilding was carried out, it is rather singular that it should have been of so small a size for such a large church, and placed so unusually far west. Its arch — assuming it to have been built at the above time — would be a copy of the ground-storey arch of the old tower ; this ground-storey, and the north transept, being to all intents and purposes duplicates, and the placing of the transept so far west, intentional, so as to be opposite the tower, for the sake of symmetry.

The western piers of the nave are square, or nearly so, and support arches, chamfered on the underside ; the piers and arches being quite plain, without mouldings. At the junction of the Perpendicular moulded arch with the plain chamfered arch in the arcading of the north aisle, a very interesting and somewhat daring corbelling occurs. (fig. 5.) This corbelling rather strengthens the opinion that the carved caps and moulded piers in the church are those blown down in the former church, and reused here ; for it is evident that the western 17th century arch is adapted to the inadequately sized carved cap, which has every appearance of being of 15th century date, the corbelling being resorted to so as to give the necessary space at the springing of the two arches.

The western steeple was built in 1830, and consists of an embattled tower, 57 feet in height, with panelled and crocketted pinnacles, and a lofty octagonal spire, finished with a weathercock. It is in the Decorated style, built in ashlar freestone, and contains a clock and eight bells. The bell on which the clock strikes the hours bears the date 1632, and has two sixpenny pieces of the reign of James I. attached to its surface. This bell was the one which formerly hung on the outside of the old south tower, and can be seen in the sketch herewith given. The other bells were cast subsequently to the blowing up, and three of them quite recently.

The roofs are “cradle” roofs, panelled and plastered throughout the church, and having carved bosses where the ribs intersect — those in the chancel being gilded. The reredos is a fine piece of work in the Decorated style, with a carved central group representing the Last Supper, the margin being carved with floral designs. The pulpit is of FIG 7 oak, and is a very good specimen of Renaissance work. (fig. 6.) It has panelled sides, the outer angles of which are finished with columns, in pairs, having Corinthian caps and moulded bases, and the frieze has boldly carved panels. The underside of the desk bears the words “Heare Gods Word” carved on a scroll. The pedestal is a modern stone one. The pulpit is probably Georgian, dating from



Detail of Rain-water Head



about the first part of the 18th century, and was perhaps a gift to the church. It is typical of much of the work to be found in the churches of Wren and the later English Renaissance architects. It is supposed that Cromwell's chaplain, the famous John Howe, preached from this pulpit; but this can hardly be the case, seeing that he held the living from 1652 to 1662, and the Renaissance style had scarcely been felt in England until the Great Fire of London, in 1666, gave Wren his chance. Hitherto, Gothic had been the universal style for church building, the only variation in the fittings being the Jacobean style, prevalent in James I. reign—quite distinct from that of the pulpit in question.

The church possesses no less than thirteen stained windows, the best being the four in the north wall of the nave and the one next to the south transept, depicting scenes from the life of Christ and the Prophets, and erected by the late Mr. William Fredk. Glubb, of Torrington, who died in 1901. On the north wall of the chancel is an exceedingly fine old monument, to Sarah Gooding, the daughter of Daniel Prideaux, and to her husband, Samuel Gooding. The inscription slab is surrounded by a mass of carving, very delicately cut, and with angel figures at the top, supporting a coat-of-arms. The size of this grand mural monument is no less than about 10 feet 6 inches in height by 6 feet 5 inches in width. Another monument, of good design, is to be found on the east wall of the south aisle—to Judith, daughter of John Hancock, of Combe Martin, who died in 1676. A gallery formerly stood at the west end of the church, and there are traces of the arches of two large windows at the extreme end of the north and south aisles. In each corner of the tower, where it joins the nave wall, is an old 17th century rain-water pipe and head. The one in the south corner is dated 1655 (fig. 7) but the other (see head-piece) bears no date.

A list of pre-Commonwealth vicars is not possessed by the church. The following list of post-Commonwealth vicars, with mention of two who served Torrington just before, and two during the Commonwealth period, is taken from "Some Notes on the Vicars of Great Torrington since the Commonwealth," by Thomas Cann Hughes, M.A., read at Totnes, August, 1900:—

VICARS.

(Pre-Commonwealth.)

Date of Institution.

No date. Richard Head (was preaching in Torrington in 1642.)

No date. Theophilus Powell (ejected in 1646—Charles I. Became rector of Langtree in 1662, and died there in 1666).

(Commonwealth.)

No date. Lewis Stuckley (died at Bideford in 1687). 1652—John Howe (ejected in 1662. Charles II.).

He then founded the church at Torrington—now the Howe Congregational Church. He died in 1705.

Post-Commonwealth.)

1662—Robert Wishart.

1683—Christopher Furneaux.

1698—Hercules Hoyle.

1713—Samuel Johnson.

1746—Henry Yonge. (His daughter Sarah married in 1786 the first Earl Nelson, brother of the great naval commander).

1785—Thomas Marsden.

1790—Richard Slade.

1798—Thomas Warren.

1805—Ralph Orde.

1807—John Fanshawe.

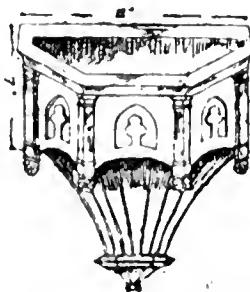
1810 (six months)—James Webber.

1810—Charles Hodgson.

1816—George Morgan.

1849—Samuel Buckland.

1894—Frank Emlyn Jones.



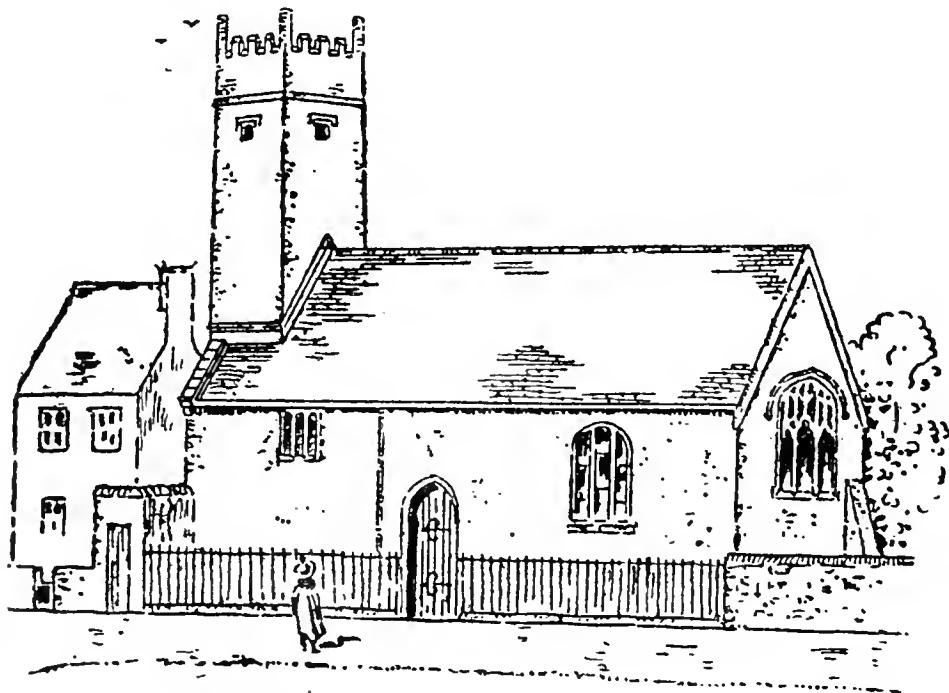


Taddiport.

Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen.

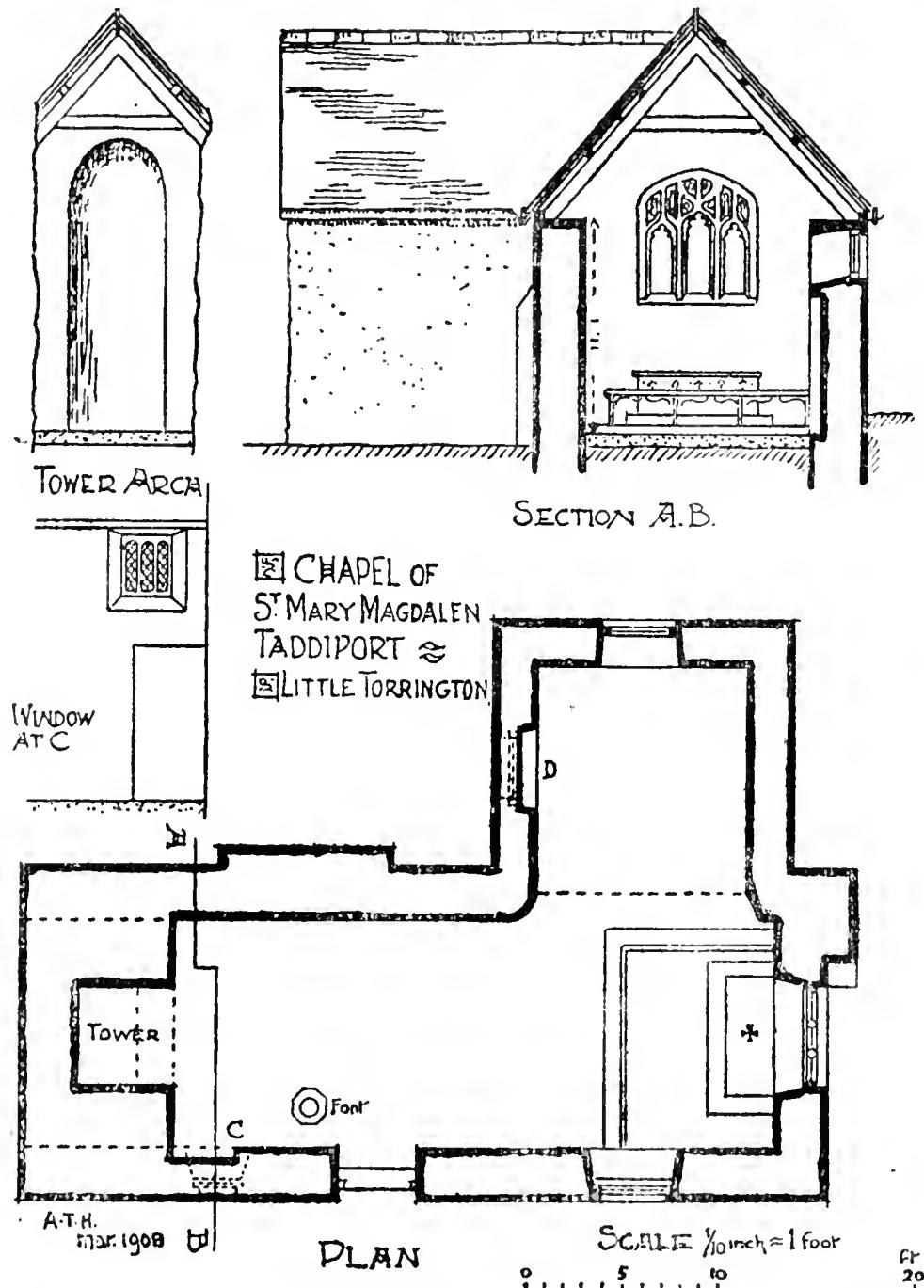


HIS little building is situated near the bridge which spans the river Torridge at the hamlet of Taddiport, below the hill at the western end of Great Torrington. Taddiport is built on the south side of the river, and is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Little Torrington, in which parish it is situated, and the chapel is used as a chapel-of-ease in connection with the parish. It is a building dating at least from 1311 (Edward II.), for in the Register of Bishop Stapeldon there is recorded the institution of Sir Richard de Brente, priest, on the 2nd of February, 1311-2, to the Chantry of St. Mary Magdalen, "juxta Pontem de Chepyngtoritone." Apart from its age, it is also of interest from the fact that it was attached to a Leper Hospital which stood on the ground adjacent to it. In a paper



o Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen o
o Taddiport o Little Torrington o
o March 1908, from the S.E. o

dealing with this hospital, written by Mr. George M. Doe, the Town Clerk of Torrington, and read before the Devonshire Association in 1900, the writer states that Thomas Reymound, in his will, dated 8th June, 1418 (Henry V.), left "40d." to the hospital. There is no record of its having been in existence before that date,



and it was still standing in 1729 (George II.); for in a copy of the Magdalen lands rental, dated November 3rd of that year, there are entries of the "Lazar Houses," but all traces have now disappeared. From the foregoing dates, therefore, one must conclude that the chapel was in existence before the hospital. It consists of a nave and north-east transept, with a tower at the west end. The nave is 30 feet

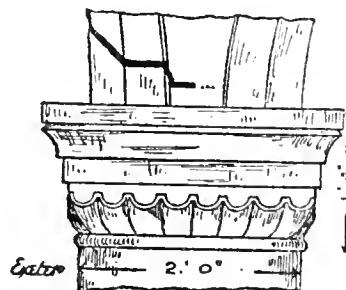
10 inches long, and 11 feet 7 inches wide, and the transept 13 feet long and 10 feet 9 inches wide. The quaint little west tower is peculiar, for it is oblong in shape; its exterior measurements, where it rises from the roof, being 7 feet 9 inches by 9 feet; the interior space beneath it, at the floor, being 5 feet by 5 feet, and its arch rising to a height of 15 feet. The tower has slightly sloping or battering sides, with little square-headed lights, and an embattled parapet, with curious cylindrical pinnacles at the corners; and contains a bell, about a foot high, bearing the initials "I.P." in raised letters, and the date "1645" (Charles I.), with two coins on its outer surface, but which are not decipherable.

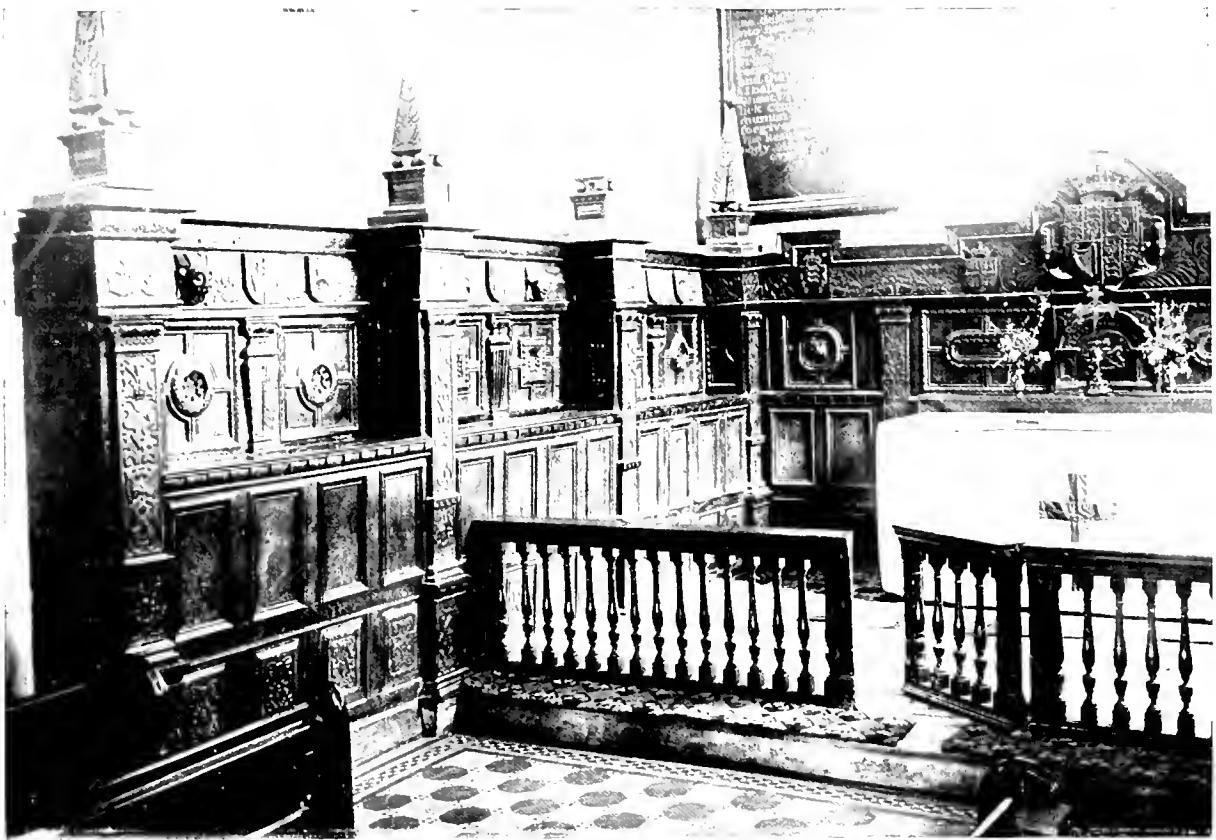
In the nave at "C" (see plan) is a recess next the tower, 7 feet high and 3 feet wide, very probably a doorway at one time; and when this was blocked up, the present doorway would have been formed. Over the recess is an old oak three-light Tudor window, measuring 2 feet by 2 feet 2 inches. The transept is probably of later date than the nave, and may be the chantry referred to in the Register of Bishop Stafford, to which Thomas Verlegh, priest, was instituted in 1396 (Richard II.). In its west wall at "D" (see plan) is part of an old window opening, walled up. The font is a modern stone one. The roofing is very plain and simple in construction, open timbered, and having collar-beam trusses. Both the roofing and the walls of the building are whitewashed, and painted on the east wall of the transept are remains of the Ten Commandments. On the south wall of the nave is painted the following text:—"Woe to them that devise Iniquitie and worke Evill upon theyr beds. When the morninge is come they practice it because it is in the power of theyr hand: And they covet fields and take them by violence. And howses & take them away: So they oppress A man & his howse. Even A man & his heritage: Micah the 2 cap."

The rents and profits of the hospital and houses connected with it had been granted to the Mayor, aldermen, and capital burgesses of Great Torrington and their successors, and to the churchwardens and overseers of Little Torrington and their successors, for the relief of the poor of the town and parish. Mr. Doe is of opinion that the selection of the above text for putting on the wall was because of some spoliation or misappropriation of the charity property.

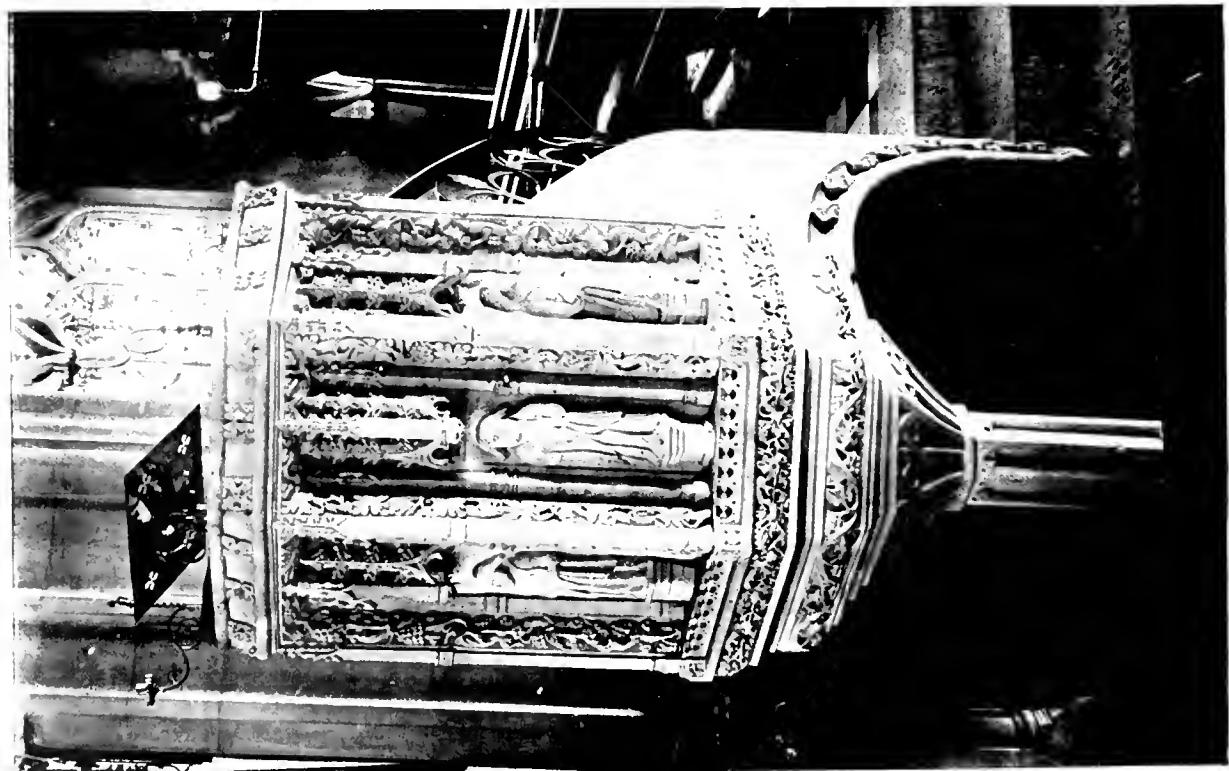
The only bit of ornamentation in the chapel consists of some lengths of carved oak wall plating at the foot of the rafters of the transept roof, the carving showing 16th century work, of a plain repeating design. The outside of the building is plastered and the roof slated.

Chiefly through the efforts of the Rev. T. McClelland, Rector of Little Torrington, the chapel has been much improved, and a pretty three-light traceried Perpendicular window put in at the east end. Services are regularly conducted in the building.

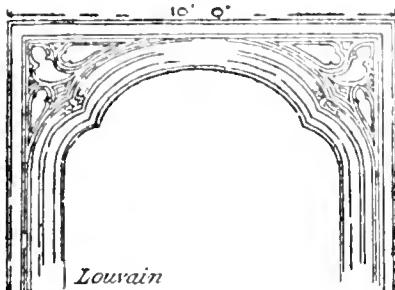




PANELLING,
NORTH MOLTON CHURCH.



THE PULPIT,
NORTH MOLTON CHURCH.



Southmolton.

Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene.



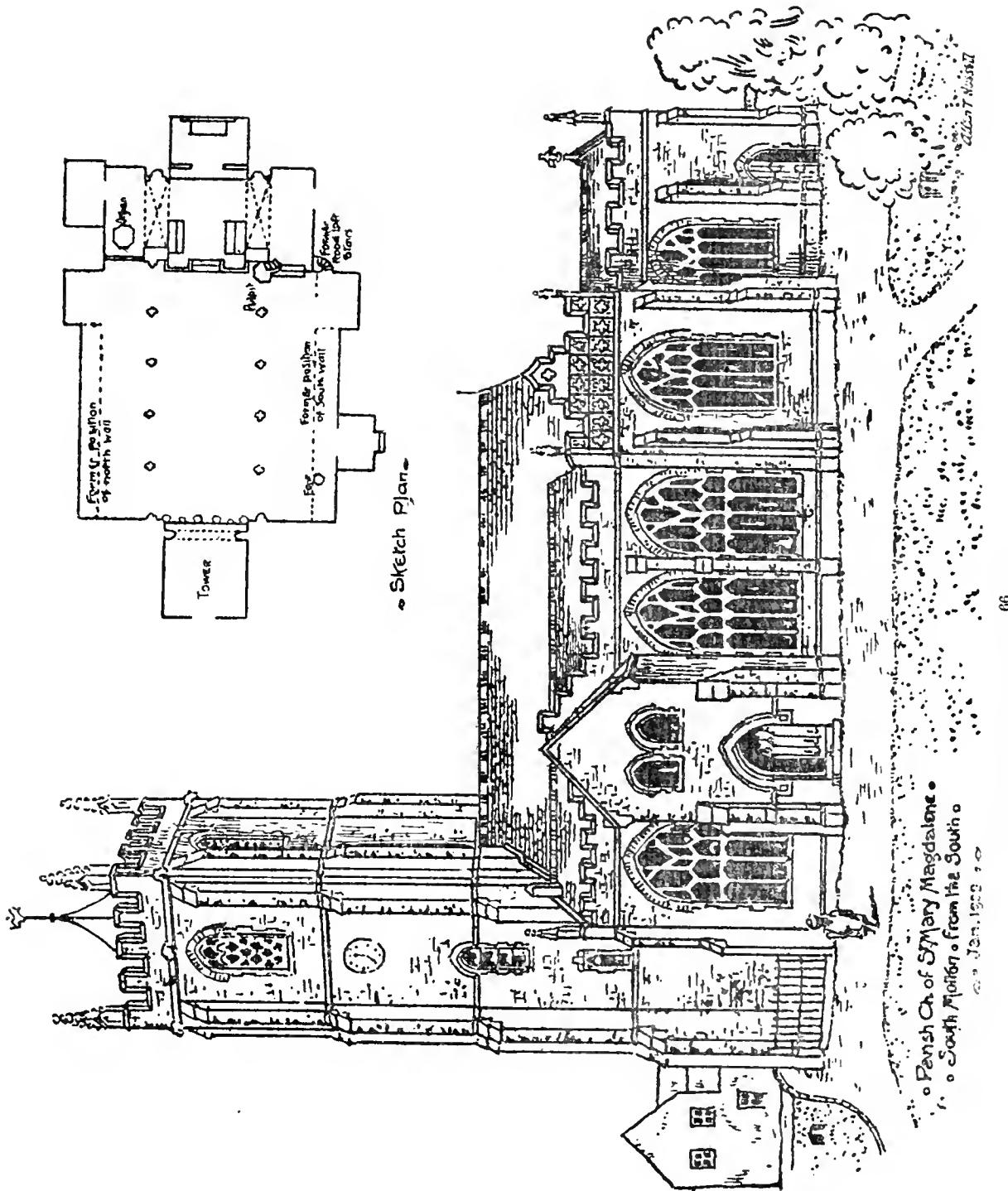
HE little ancient borough and market town of Southmolton is very like the little ancient borough and market town of Torrington, and both are built on high ground—Southmolton having views, northwards, of Exmoor, and Torrington, southwards, of Dartmoor. Southmolton takes its name from the river Mole, on the western bank of which it is situated, and at the Norman Conquest formed part of the Crown demesnes.

A quaint bit of information is given by Risdon, who states that in the reign of Edward I. the Manor was held by Lord Martin, under the Earl of Gloucester, on condition of his providing a man with a bow and three arrows to attend the Earl, when hunting in the neighbourhood.

Also like Torrington, Southmolton can lay claim to having been the scene of an action fought between the Royalists and Parliamentary Forces in the Civil War; for in 1655 a skirmish took place here, when 200 Royalists, under Sir Joseph Wagstaffe and others, were defeated by some troops of Cromwell's horse; and tradition says that Wagstaffe escaped by leaping his horse over the north wall of the churchyard, which is still known as "Wagstaffe's Wall." There is also a tradition to the effect that a portion of the Parliamentary army, who then quartered here, stabled their horses in the Church, and defaced the stone pulpit and did other damage.

Situated on an elevated site in the central portion of the town, the appearance of the church is distinctly noble, especially when viewed from the south. It is a large building, having seating accommodation for 1,060 persons, and consists of a nave and chancel, with north and south aisles to each, shallow north and south transepts, south porch, vestry, and western tower. A large portion is of fifteenth century work. The late Mr. John Cocks, in his book "Records of the Borough of Southmolton," gives some historical facts with regard to the building, which are as follow:—In 1410 (Henry IV.) an enquiry was held as to the "grievous dilapidation" of the chancel of the then existing church. This led to the construction of the present church.

In 1702 (Anne) a new organ and rood loft were fixed. The church had been for 50 years without an organ. In 1705 (Anne) the old oak seats or benches—some finely carved—were converted into high-backed pews! In 1711-12 (Anne), a gallery, next the tower, was erected for scholars. During the years 1757-8 (George II.), the chancel screen, with its rood loft, and the parclose screens between the chancel and its aisles, were destroyed, and the organ moved to the west end of the church. In 1759 (George II.) the church was re-roofed, and the arcades taken down and rebuilt. In 1825 (George IV.) it was widened by extending the north and south walls of the nave aisles $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet out, and also a gallery was erected against each of these walls.



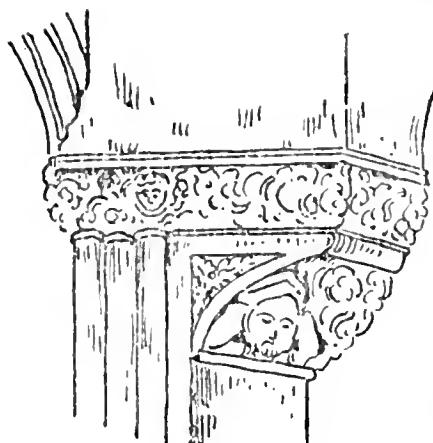


FIG. 1

South Molton

Owing to the galleries blocking the windows, the latter were lengthened downwards. The year 1858 saw the chancel repaired and restored, a new east window inserted, and two old windows in the north and south walls blocked up. In 1865 the arcades were again rebuilt, the walls raised higher, and a clerestory constructed ; the whole church newly roofed and seated, the south and west galleries removed, and the organ placed in the south transept. In 1870 the organ was divided into two parts, and again fixed at the west end—but on the floor. In 1900 the chancel was paved with black and white slabs ; new oak choir stalls erected, a new organ purchased, and placed in the north aisle of the chancel, where it now stands. The south porch, and parvise over, were built in 1865, replacing a 15th century one.

The writer is of opinion that the church which preceded the present one was a Norman structure, with no doubt Early English and Decorated additions ; and that the walls of the chancel of the existing church out of which the great arches are cut, are Norman (being the remains of the former church), for they are of enormous thickness—no less than 5 feet 9 inches—and could only have been built in the Norman period—that in which very massive construction reigned.

The chancel arches, opening into its north and south aisles, are of large span, and of depressed four-centred Tudor form, with panelled soffites. When these arches were constructed, the massive walls on their western bearings were thinned away—the great thickness allowing this to be done without risk. The overhanging portions were then supported by carved corbels. The cutting away of the walling may have been done purely to obtain an architectural feature, there being no stone chancel arch ; or the object may have been to broaden the chancel opening and give more length for the rood screen ; in any case the effect is most striking and unusual. When the 15th century south porch was taken down in 1865, parts of a Norman font—complete except one stone—were found built into the walls. This was probably the font from the former church, broken up and used in this way, for a new font (fig. 7) was supplied when the rebuilding took place in the 15th century. It is very probable that the rebuilding was spread over a considerable number of years in the 15th century, the work commencing with the nave and its aisles, as the detail in this part of the church shows it to be earlier than the chancel, the aisles of which—judging from the great arches—were probably opened out in the Early Tudor period, of date about 1485 (Henry VII.) The north aisle of the chancel and the south transept were used as chantry chapels, as the piscinae still in existence in them clearly show. (Figs. 2 and 3.) These piscinae were discovered in 1865 on removing the plastering from the walls. There is a niche to each of the eastern piers of the chancel arches which formerly bore figures. Southmolton church has a remarkably large amount of fine Perpendicular and Tudor carved stone work, restored no doubt to some extent, but so carefully done that the

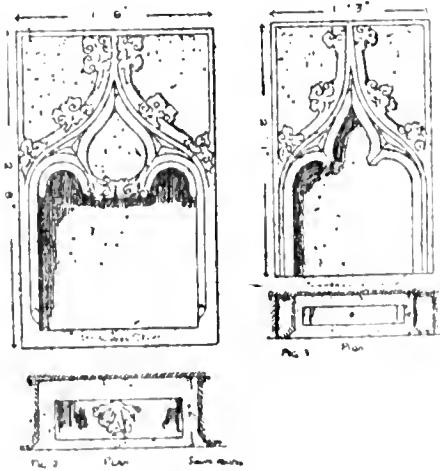


FIG. 2

PLAN

SECTION

original outlines have apparently not been interfered with. The caps of the nave piers are very vigorously carved in different designs ; some in conventional Perpendicular, and others in most curious figure work—for instance, see fig. 4, a cap immediately

west of the chancel, showing a most absurd intertwining of men's figures with grasped hands. What the carving on the cap (fig. 5) represents is not

known with any degree of certainty. Judging from the costume one can only suggest that it depicts a foot soldier of about 1420 (Henry V.), who is holding his shield, and having regaled rather too freely at table, is in the act of toppling over ; the serving-maid leaning back and laughing at him. The gentleman at the corner holding a shield is probably not connected with the story. Fig. 1 shows one of the corbels before referred to at the chancel opening. It contains a half-figure of a man looking down in the direction of the nave, and it has been suggested it may represent the builder of the church.

A very graceful piece of work is the Tudor doorway to the vestry (fig. 6), a beautiful interlacing leaf pattern running around the jambs and arch, and also having the spandrels carved. The font (fig. 7) is Late 15th century date, and of elegant design ; octagonal, with deeply sunk cusped quatrefoils, with centre leaf ornament on each side of the basin, the coving below having large leaf paterae. The stem is modern.

The finest feature of the church is the splendid 15th century pulpit—truly a gem, and of exquisitely refined detail and perfect proportion and grouping. It is of Beer stone, and each of its five sides has niches with crocketted canopies, containing figures of Our Lord and the four Evangelists. Each side has margins of carved floral work, and the pedestal is finished with a cresting and a cornice of interlacing tendrils in two rows. The carving closely resembles, in the design and intricacy of its detail, that found in the Devonian rood screens of about 1430-50 ; and the pulpit would probably date from that period (Henry VI). It shows very little sign of having been injured by Cromwell's troops, as is traditionally supposed, with the exception of the figures—the heads of which were evidently knocked off, the existing heads being restorations.

The interior of the church during the 15th and two following centuries must have been exceptionally beautiful, with its wealth of stone carving, its rood and other screens, carved bench ends, and

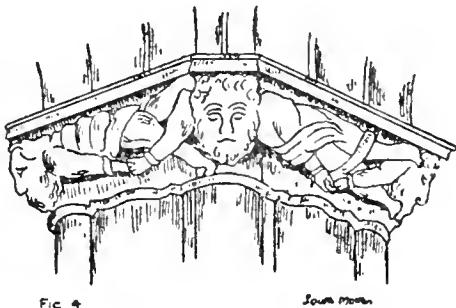


FIG. 4

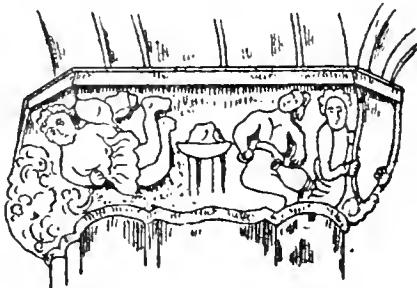


FIG. 5

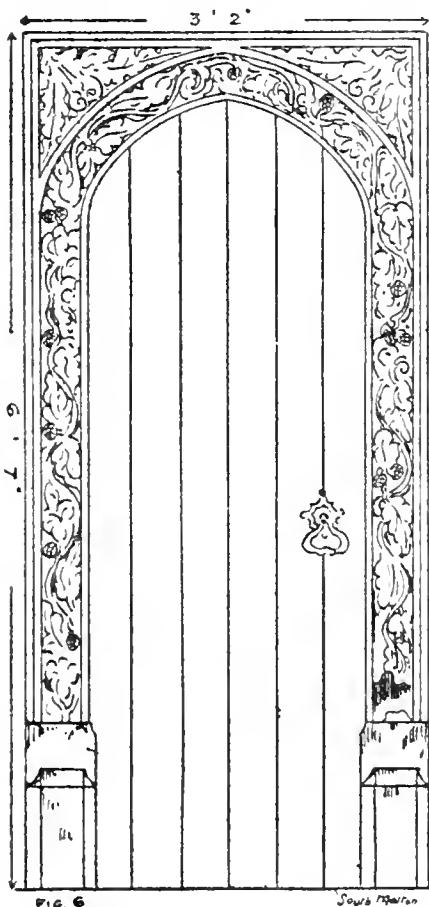


FIG. 6

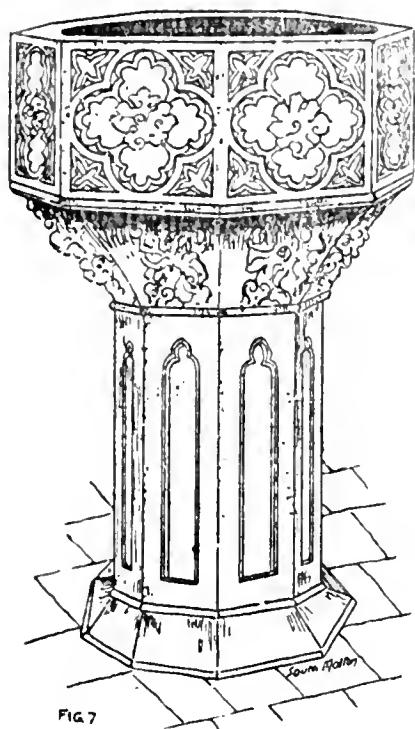


FIG. 7

open-timbered cradle roofs. The chancel retains its old oak open-timbered cradle roof—a fine specimen, and decorated in colour. It closely resembles the fine old oak cradle roofing of Northam Church. All the remaining roofs are modern collar-beam roofs of steep pitch.

The tower is of 15th century date, as can be seen more particularly by its doorway, a good and typical example of Early Perpendicular work, well moulded, and with carved floral paterae of conventional design in the central moulding. Of sturdy appearance, the tower is known as "Strength," and is 107 feet 6 inches high from the base to the top of the parapet, and to the top of weathercock about 128 feet. It contains a peal of eight bells, hung in 1807 (George III.), and a clock. Until 1751 there was a spire, and large pinnacles with vanes at the corners. In that year it was struck by lightning, which injured the spire and the pinnacles, melted some lead on the roof, and moved a bell out of place. The spire was then taken

down, the vanes removed from the pinnacles, the roof relaid with lead, and the present ironwork and weathercock put up. The tower was repaired and repointed in 1845, and again repointed in 1900. On its south side it bears an uncommon looking old Perpendicular niche (fig. 8), but the figure is missing. Carving, representing the heads of three ladies—possibly the donors of some part of the church—is built in over the niche. A very interesting feature is the winding stone stairease in the east wall of the south transept, which led to the old rood-loft. This transept has a pretty embattled south wall, with a raised central portion, and enriched with quatrefoils, finished at the angles with crocketed pinnacles. The nave has a clerestory, with five three-light windows on each side; but they are not visible on the outside of the church, owing to the height of the roofs of the north and south aisles.

There is a large amount of stained glass within the church, thirteen windows of large size containing it, perhaps the best being that in the windows of the nave aisles.

On the walls of the north and south aisles are two richly carved old monuments in the Renaissance style, but the inscriptions are not legible.

A memorial slab on the wall of the north aisle is to "Mr. Henry Karslake and his wife Sarah, daughter of the Rev. Joshua Hole, Minister of the



FIG. 8

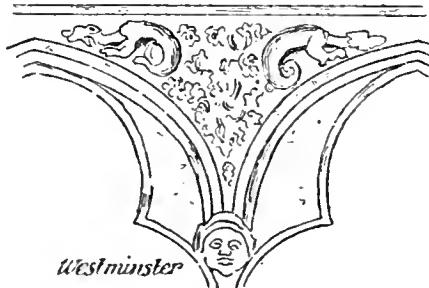
South Molton

Parish, and two of their sons, all of whom were destroyed by a fire which broke out in their house in the Town, on Jan. 30, 1749." The reredos was erected in 1865, and is very ornate, in the Decorated style and built with Caen stone, with crocketted gables and marble shafts, two of which carry angel figures. It was the gift of the late Alderman Cock, churchwarden for many years. The stone screen separating the tower from the nave, is a handsome, massive, and lofty structure, erected in 1903, in memory of Eliza Melhuish, and its traceried doors were given by the late Mr. John Morris, formerly of Southmolton. They are of Spanish mahogany, of very fine workmanship, and were purchased by Mr. Morris from a French mansion.

The following list of incumbents is taken from the before mentioned book—"Records of the Borough of Southmolton":—

RECTORS, PERPETUAL CURATES, AND VICARS.

1277—Thomas de Sueneyssia.	1536—Thomas Marshall.
1317—Nicholas de Wedergrave.	1605—Richard Sargent.
1321—Thomas Flemynge.	1629—John Coren.
1354—Hugh de Newehalle.	1651—Oliver Dunning.
1361—Robert Corbet.	1657—James Kingswell.
1366—John Hacche.	1682—John Cruse.
1406-7—William Peion.	1695—Joshua Hole.
1410—John Park.	1746—John Elworthy.
1429—Edmond Lacy.	1794—William Toms.
1440—John Carnallon.	1833—Thomas Henry Maitland.
1458—William Attingham.	1876—Frederick King.
1504—John Clark.	1902—Frank Maxwell Wallington.
1510—Richard Follet.	





Crediton.

Parish Church of the Holy Cross.



HERE is a local rhyme in Crediton and round about which runs:—

“ Kirdon was a market town
When Exeter was a yuzzy* down.”

The history of the church certainly justifies Crediton's claim to a hoary antiquity, and it is traditionally said to have been the birth-place of the great missionary Winfred, or St. Boniface, the apostle of Central Germany, martyred in 756.

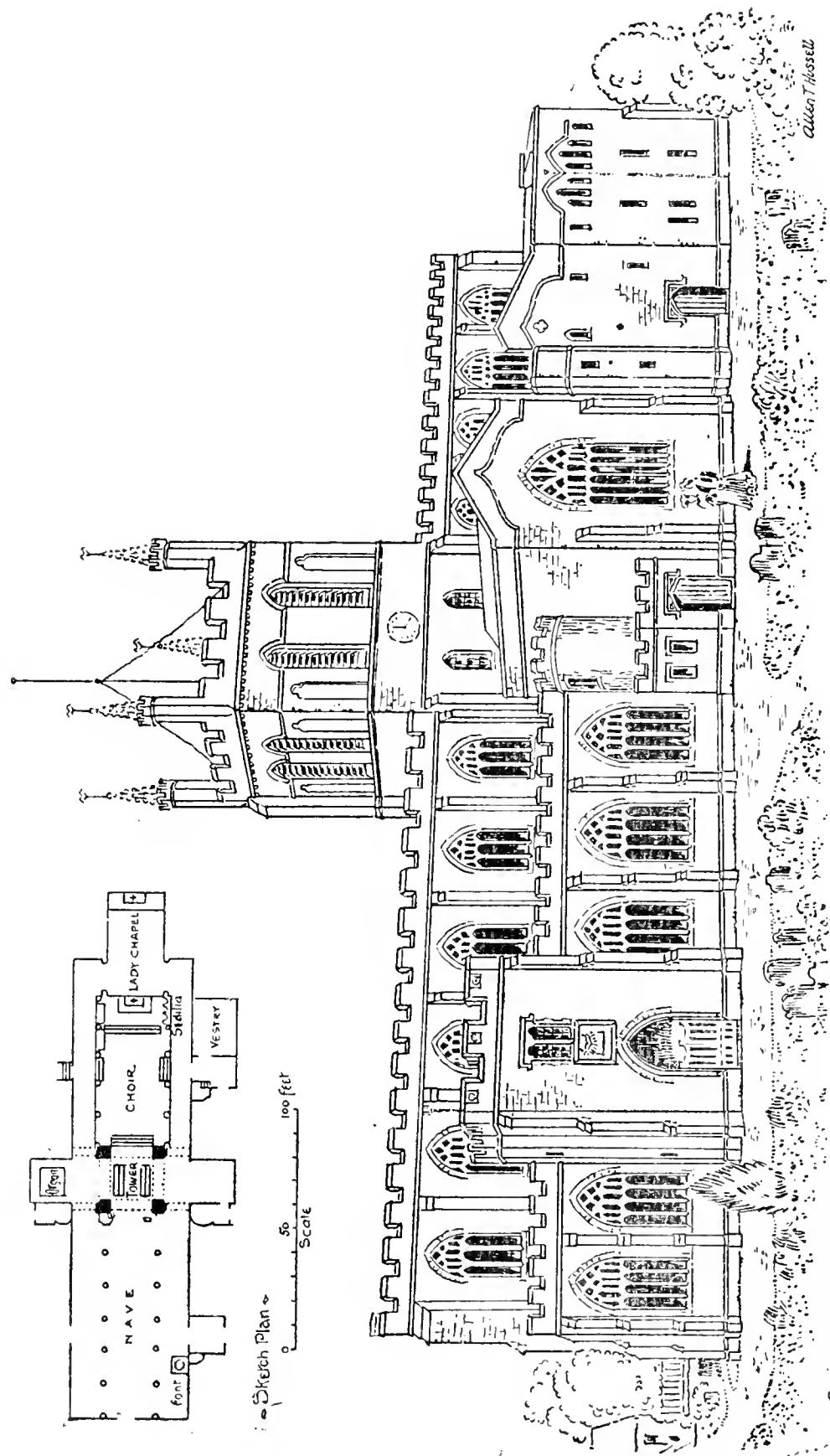
In 1645 Crediton was visited by the Parliamentary forces, under the command of Fairfax and Cromwell, camping in “The Lord's Meadow,” as it was and is called. It is said that Cromwell, with other of the officers and men, heard a sermon in the church from Master Joshua Sprigge, Fairfax's chaplain. This must have been on the occasion of the march from Exeter to Torrington, by way of Crediton, for on the 16th February, 1645, they arrived at Torrington, meeting the Royalist forces there and defeating them.

Crediton now retains but few of its ancient buildings, for extensive fires occurred in 1743, and again in 1769. Just outside the town is Downes, the seat of Devon's hero, the late General Sir Redvers Buller.

The church stands on a fine open site in the centre of the town, and is a magnificent structure—in scale and plan bearing more resemblance to a small cathedral than to a country church. Of first-class workmanship throughout, and well proportioned in all its parts, it is of cruciform plan, and consists of a choir of five bays, with aisles and clerestory; an eastern Lady Chapel, nave of six bays with clerestory, aisles, north and south transepts, south porch with library over, central tower, and a large building south-east of the choir, containing the vestry and other rooms. The first church here was a Saxon one. There are remains of Roman encampments in the neighbourhood, and Roman coins and pottery have been discovered at various times; hence it is believed that Crediton is of Roman origin. In the year 910—a few years after Devon was created a separate diocese—Aidolf, the third Bishop, removed his seat from Bishops Tawton, near Barnstaple, to Crediton. Here it remained until removed to Exeter by Leofric in 1050 (Edward the Confessor). The church was then made collegiate, but all traces of it have been obliterated for centuries. Its site is believed to have been near the present churchyard.

The second church was built on the site of the present one, in the Transitional Norman period—date about 1160—the proof of this being the fact that the lower

*Referring to furze or gorse.



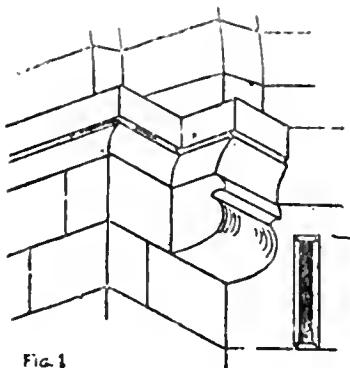


FIG. 1

portion of the existing great central tower is of that period, being the oldest part of the church. Alterations and enlargements took place during the Early English and Decorated periods, and then the building was allowed to fall into a ruinous condition. A pamphlet written by the former vicar—the late Rev. C. Felton Smith—gives some historical facts concerning the third or present church. It states that the former church having become very dilapidated, gifts of money commenced to flow in towards its rebuilding; and amongst others, in 1415 (Henry V.), Thomas Barton, Canon of Exeter and Rector of Ilfracombe, gave “£20 of gold” towards the construction of a new window in the church, and

to give additional height to some of the smaller windows. But although many gifts had been bestowed, nothing much was done until 1523 (Henry VIII.), when Bishop Vesey peremptorily interfered, and ordered a rebuilding—except a few portions—the operations extending up to about 1545. Thus the church, as it now stands, is practically a sixteenth century building, in the Perpendicular style, containing portions of Transitional Norman, Early English, Decorated and Modern work.

The combined interior length of the nave and choir is 176 feet 3 inches; the width of the nave and aisles together being 48 feet 8 inches, and the width across from end to end of transepts 84 feet 2 inches. The Lady Chapel is 41 feet 6 inches in length, the width at its western end being 22 feet 4 inches, and at the eastern end 23 feet. Adding three feet for the thickness of the wall between the choir and the Lady Chapel, the combined interior length of the church and Lady Chapel from end to end is no less than 220 feet 9 inches. On entering, one is struck by the beauty of the walling. This is of local felspathic trap—a rich, warm, red-coloured stone—no portion being plastered, but the whole exposed to view, and with no ornament except the lightly carved caps to the pier shafts; any decoration, fresco or mosaic being rendered quite superfluous and unnecessary with such natural tints as this church possesses. The exterior of the building is also faced with similar stone, fitting in well with the local colouring—for some of the richest red land in Devon is found here and in the neighbourhood. The oldest portion of the structure itself is the lower stage of the tower, showing inside the church. This is of the Transitional Norman period, with plain piers and recessed pointed arches rising from carved caps, some of which are shown in figs. 2 and 3, and a corbel in fig. 1.

The walling is of stone from quarries at Posbury and Knole, both worked up to the present time, in the parish of Crediton. The basin of the font, however, is without doubt much older than this part of the tower. It may be the basin of an old Saxon font, used in the first or Saxon

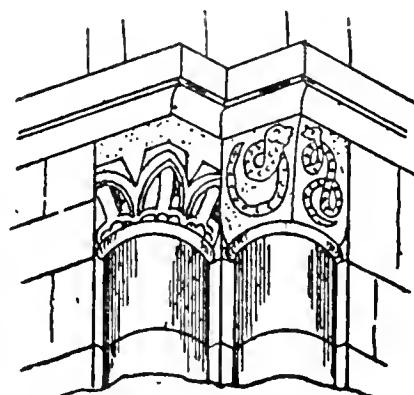


FIG. 2

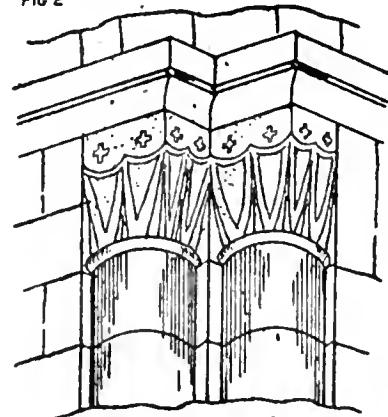


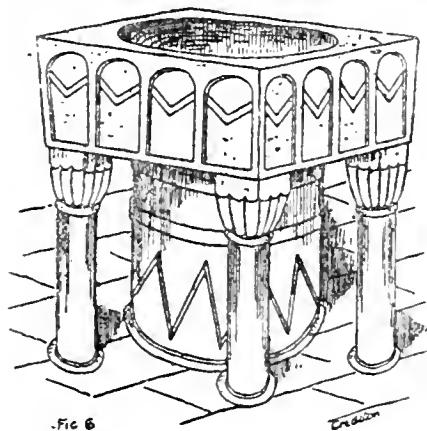
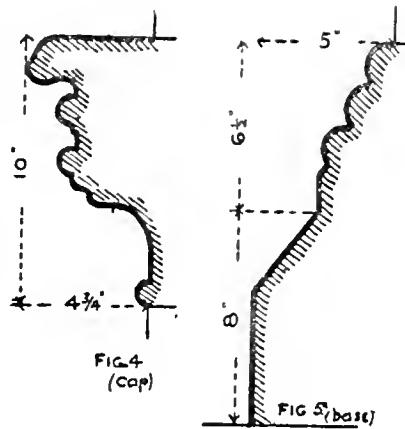
FIG. 3

Crediton

church at Crediton, for the design is much too simple and too lightly sunk for Norman work. (Fig. 6.) Each side measures 2 feet 4 inches at the top, the depth being one foot, and the material appears to be a fine grained grey granite—probably from Dartmoor. The stem and pillars are modern stone ones. The upper portion of the tower is embattled, and has an octagonal embattled turret at each angle, with crocketed spirelets and vanes, and contains a clock and eight bells. The Lady Chapel, and the building to the south-east of the choir containing the vestry and other rooms, come next to the lower stage of the tower in point of age. The Lady Chapel is of Early Decorated date, about 1310 (Edward II-III.), as can be seen by the mouldings of the caps and bases of the piers of its archways opening into the north and south aisles. These mouldings—figs. 4 and 5—are in pure Decorated style—a feature not to be found in many of the Devonian churches. The Chapel is quite plain in character, the walling being left unplastered, and there are four windows filled in with tracery in the Perpendicular style. The Chapel was used as the Grammar School of Crediton from the time when the school was established by Edward VI. until the year 1860, when new schools were built in the town. At that time it was so dilapidated that the east wall had to be taken down to the ground level and rebuilt. At the junction of the sixteenth century south aisle of the choir with the wall of the Lady Chapel, it is curious to note how the wall has been cut back so as to obtain room for the east window. The Chapel was probably used as such in connection with the old church, for it could not have been the chancel, seeing that the tower has always evidently been a central one, and therefore the general plan of the old church must have been similar to that of the present one.

The building to the south-east of the choir is considered to have been the old Chapter House, and probably took up the two lower stages. It is of the same period as the Lady Chapel, its walling being of the same character, and, further, there is a Decorated recess (fig. 7) in the wall, on the left-hand side of its west entrance. In the sill of this recess are two circular sinkings or basins, and so it may have been a double holy-water stoup. The building is now divided into three storeys, containing a vestry and large vestibule on the ground floor; on the first floor two rooms, one of which is used as a choir vestry; and on the top floor a large room used for the meetings of the Governors of the church, and which at one time was a Priest's Chamber. In the room are some curious old chests, and also pieces of old armour.

To proceed with the description of the church itself, apart from these older portions. The nave is of six bays and the choir of five bays, both having lofty clerestoreys. The piers and arches of the arcades are moulded with fine effect in the hard red stone from Thorverton, near Crediton; the piers having shafts at both the angles, finished with Beer stone carved caps, the arcading being unusually massive for the period, and of fine proportion and great dignity. The wall shafts in the nave, carrying the roof trusses, rise from the string course over the arches; but in the choir they rise from the pier caps. The most interesting and perhaps most beautiful feature of the church, is the old



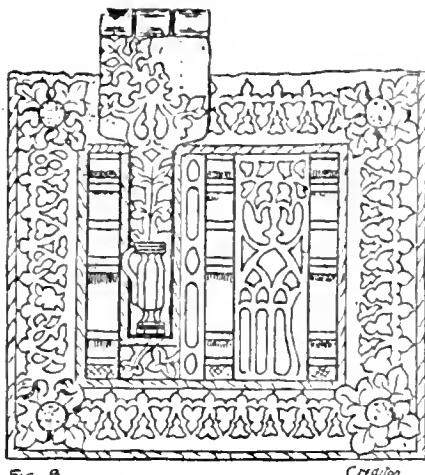


FIG. 8

circular in plan, with groined canopies, all being ornamented with Decorated and Perpendicular tracery of very refined work and design, the canopies showing traces of carved bosses, and there are distinct remains of the colouring—of a red tint.

Resting on the floor, on the north side of the altar, are two very imposing and lofty seventeenth century monuments in alabaster and coloured marbles. One is to Sir William Periam, Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1592 (Elizabeth), who died in 1605, at the age of 70. He lived at Fulford—now Shobrooke Park, in the parish of Shobrooke, adjoining Crediton; was an ardent Puritan, and sat as one of the judges at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay. The other monument is to one of the Tuckfields, who came into possession after the death of Periam. A very old monument, and one of great interest, is situated at the east end of the south aisle of the choir. It is of stone, consisting of two recumbent effigies of a knight in plate armour and a lady. These figures are believed to represent Sir John Sully and his wife, whose bodies were buried in the church. Sir John owned the Manor of Iddesleigh, which afterwards became the property of the Northcote family, and supplied a title for the late earl. He was Baron of Torrington, and died in 1387 (Richard II.) at his house at Iddesleigh, at the age of 105. He fought at Halidon Hill, at the siege of Berwick, 1333, in the reign of Edward III.

In 1547, Edward VI. vested the church and some lands by deed to twelve of the principal inhabitants, incorporated as the "Twelve Governors of the church of Crediton," and by whose successors the church is still kept in repair out of the tithes. During the 40 years—1847 to 1887—they restored the building.

The walls had been whitewashed several times, but this was cleaned off about the year 1857, and the roofs of the nave, choir, and aisles, which were originally of oak, had been plastered and whitewashed; but the Governors, during the restoration, had them removed, and new open oak roofs in fifteenth century style, carved in various parts, were substituted. Chancel Misericade oak stalls, with carved tracery and poppy-heads, were also erected.

The seating of the body of the church is modern, in oak, with traceried ends, and there is a fine oak eagle-lectern. The choristers are

stone sedilia or clergy stalls in the choir. It is in three seats or compartments. Some of the decorative panelling on it is of the Perpendicular period, showing none later than this, so that the sedilia must be a relic from the old church, and of date about 1400 (Henry IV.-V.), and refixed in its present position when the sixteenth century rebuilding took place. At the back, facing the south aisle of the choir, is a canopied recess enclosing a flat table monument or tomb, supposed to have been that of a Dean of the church. The cornice of the canopy has numerous carved figures in a mutilated condition; in fact the whole of the sedilia has been very much defaced, but sufficient of it is left to show that it was of extreme beauty. The three stalls are semi-

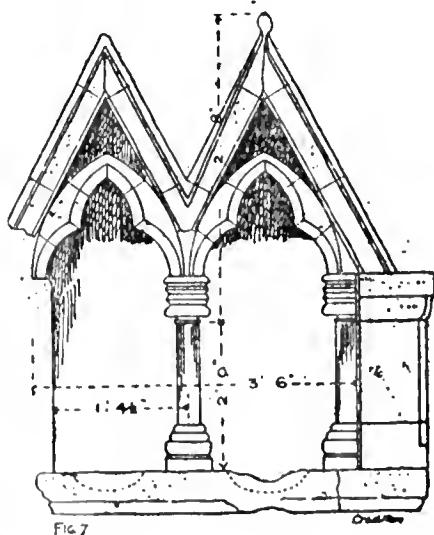


FIG. 7

placed under the lower stage of the tower, as much of the sound would be intercepted by the massive Norman masonry if they were placed in the choir. The pulpit is a modern stone one, with canopied niches bearing carved figures. There is a very beautiful old oak chest resting on the floor at the east end of the north aisle of the choir. It measures 5 feet 6 inches long by 2 feet 1 inch wide, and 3 feet 2 inches high. It is panelled in carved work in the design of window tracery, with ogee arches ornamented with very vigorously carved crockets of large size; the spandrels filling up the top parts of the panels above the arches being again carved with tracery. The base is also carved in undulating open-tracery work, and rests on a plinth, the upper member of which is carved; and a part of the front central panel has a carved group representing the infant Christ in the manger, and the distribution of the gifts, surmounted by an overhanging open-traceried canopy. The design and detail of this chest stamp it as being foreign. It is in the Flamboyant style—rather late in the style—possibly seventeenth century, as there is a slight touch of Renaissance work about it—the plinth having a carved member which in classic architecture would be a “beaded astragal,” and one or two other parts show the same spirit. The lock-plate is of very elaborate design, (see fig. 8).

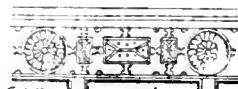
The windows on the north and south side of the church, from the west end of the nave to the extreme east end of the choir aisles, have stone seats in the thickness of the walls, and these were probably the only seats for the parishioners at one time. The great east and west windows are magnificent eight-light Perpendicular windows, filled with stained glass, in figure subjects; and there are also several other stained windows in the church and Lady Chapel. The south transept and the ends of the north and south aisles of the choir, retain old piscinæ of plain arched design, and therefore these parts of the church were no doubt formerly used as chapels.

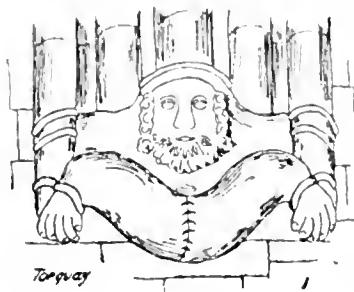
Over the south porch is a library, with many valuable old books, and three old chained bibles on a sloping stand. The stand is 6 feet 6 inches long and 4 feet high, and the crumpled condition of the leaves of the bibles show them to have been very much used. The church is well placed, standing out unobstructed on all sides, with a background of trees throwing out the red walling to perfection. The long level line of embattled parapet adds to the apparent length of the building, and causes the central tower to stand out with great effect.

A list of early incumbents is not obtainable from the church, but the later ones are here given.

VICARS.

Oct., 1583-95—Peter Duncan (then moved to Kenn).	1742—John Stacey.
No records until	1759—Samuel Hart.
1689—Thomas Ley.	1793—John Rudall.
1721—Robert Ham.	1835—Samuel Rowe.
1731—John Carwithen.	1854—Charles Felton Smith.
	June, 1901—Walter M. Smith-Dorrien.





Berrynarbor.

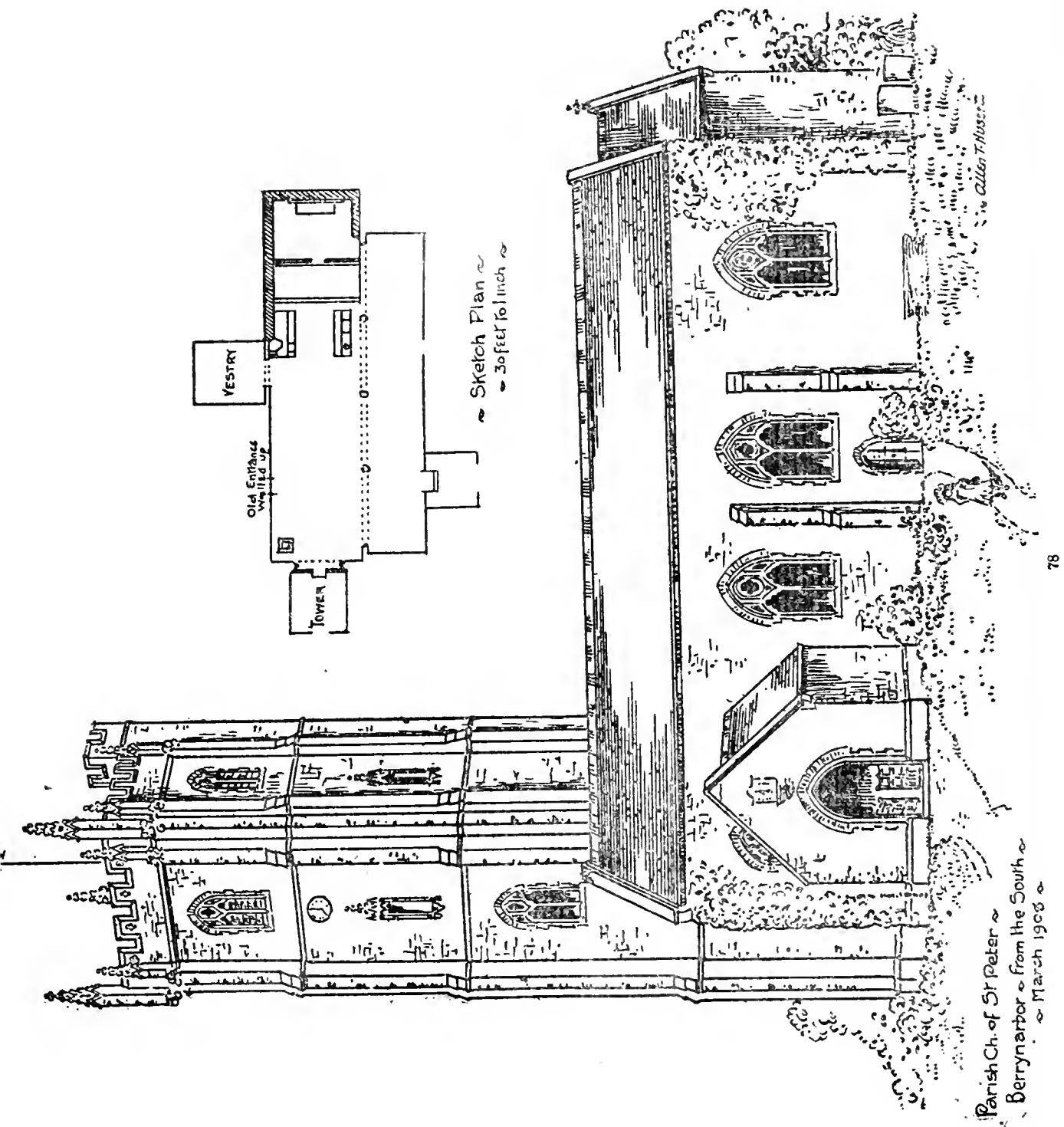
Parish Church of St. Peter.



HE village of Berrynarbor lies midway between Ilfracombe and Combe Martin, along the coast road running for five miles through scenery which, for variety of form and vivid colouring, is not to be surpassed in Devon. Situated at the head of a wooded valley, the village is built on high ground, about a mile inland from Watermouth Castle—a modern mansion embowered in trees, which overlooks a wonderfully beautiful little land-locked harbour.

Berrynarbor is a corrupt combination of the names of its former lords, the De Perrys and Herberts, and the parish is famous as being the birth-place of John Jewell, D.D., Bishop of Salisbury, 1559-71, who was born at Bowden farmhouse on May 24th, 1522, and died at Monkton Farley, Wilts, 21st September, 1571.

The church is built on a site at the top of the steep village street, and is worthy of its surroundings. It could hardly have been better placed, and its tower when used for beacon purposes must have served well, as it overlooks a wide area, and northwards also commands the sea to some extent. The church consists of a nave and south aisle, chancel, vestry, south porch and grand western tower. The interior length, from the west end of nave to the east end of chancel, is 74 feet 11 inches; and the combined width of nave and aisle is 33 feet 10 inches—being 4 feet 10 inches longer, but 5 inches narrower than Combe Martin church. The church was repaired in 1862, and further in 1880, and the chancel was restored in 1889. In 1887—the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign—the roofs, tower, and belfry were restored, and new oak tower and vestry screens erected, entirely at the expense of Mrs. Basset, of Watermouth Castle, lady of the manor. There are sittings for 300 persons. On examining the structure there is evidence to show that a Norman church stood on the site or a part of it, and that later on this was replaced by an Early English building. Then in the Late Perpendicular period—probably about 1483 (Edward IV.-V.), and later on in the Early 16th century or Tudor period, the Early English church was almost entirely demolished and rebuilt. The Norman work in the existing church consists of the vestry arch and the stem of the font; the Early English work being the walls of the chancel—shown by the hatched lines on the sketch plan, and probably built about the year 1220 (Henry III.). These walls are of considerable thickness, built in local rubble stone exposed to view—the colour effect being very pleasing. There are two lancet windows in the north wall, and one in the south, deeply splayed internally. The rubble-stone arches above the lancets are very skilfully built. The east window is a modern three-light one in the Decorated style. There is a set-back in the north wall just by the pulpit, and also



in the south wall where the arcading starts, which show that when the 15th century builders took the church in hand, they widened the nave to the extent of these set-backs (see sketch plan), where it will be noticed that the nave arcading is built clear of the south wall of the chancel, and that the north wall of the nave breaks back from that of the chancel. The vestry was probably originally a 15th century chantry chapel, or a transept; and the Norman arch (fig. 1) is probably a relic of Norman work contained in the Early English church, taken from its former position at the time of rebuilding, and rebuilt in its present position. Its thickness of 2 feet 4 inches shows that it must

have been an arch within the previous building (probably forming a part of the arcading)

and not formed in an outer wall as it now stands; for if that had been the case, then for Norman work it would have been much thicker. Consequently the position it now occupies cannot be its original one, for the thickness of the present north wall of the church is not sufficient to establish the fact that it (the wall) can be of Norman date. The arch is of characteristic Norman workmanship, built with squared and dressed local red sandstone, such as is found at Combe Martin, about three miles away, and with impost mouldings of Norman section.

The general design and detail of the tower, and especially the mouldings of its ground storey arch and its western doorway, show that it is of Late Perpendicular date—about 1483 (Edward IV. V.)—and would no doubt have been the first work taken in hand when the rebuilding took place, and after that would have followed the nave and its south aisle, the transept (now the vestry) and the porch. To describe the tower in detail—it is 96 feet in height, and of three stages; the peal of six bells being rung from the ground floor, the ropes passing through a handsome wrought-iron guide frame, placed a few feet below the floor of the second stage. The belfry stage has a two-light louvre opening on each side, all of the same design, and the stage below has a large canopied niche in each wall, and a clock on the south. The entrance doorway has boldly moulded jambs and arch, with carved conventional Perpendicular pateræ at intervals, and the label mould is finished with carved heads as stops. The large window over the doorway has an exceptionally well constructed inner

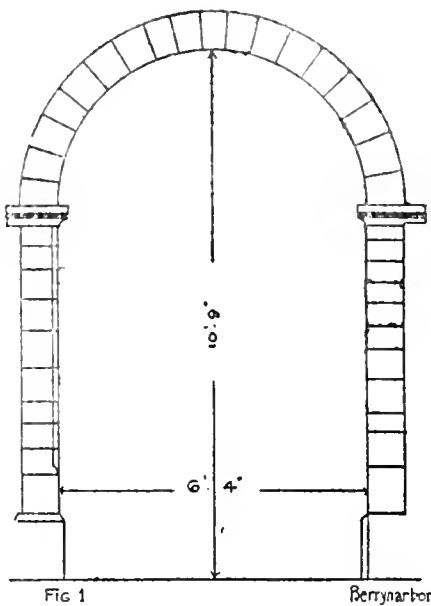
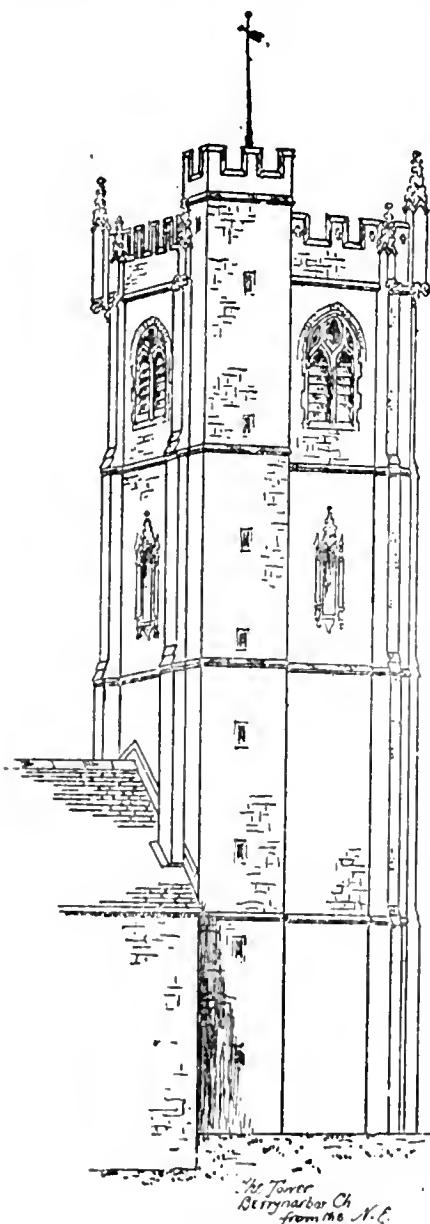




FIG. 2

Berry narbor

arch, the voussoirs or arch stones being each about 3 inches in thickness, and the keystone of about the same thickness, in freestone. This arch is perhaps the finest interior feature of the church, and it contrasts well with the plain moulded free-stone ground-storey arch. The tower is finished with an embattled parapet, having crocketted pinnacles at each angle overhanging on corbels—a very uncommon treatment, and one which gives this tower an air of distinction apart from others.

The angle buttresses are finished at the top with crocketted pinnacles—another unusual and beautiful arrangement. The pinnacles finish a little above the parapet, into which they are built. They balance in a very artistic manner the effect of the overhanging angle pinnacles, tieing them back as it were, and giv-

ing the idea of strength. The parapet is lightly built, about 9 inches in thickness, and is pierced with quatre-foils; and the gables at the foot of the crockets of the angle pinnacles are finished with little carved heads. The carving of the pinnacles is of rich design, and some grotesque animal carving is found just below the parapet—that on the south-east corner being two dogs confronting each other in a very aggressive way. Architecturally the finest side of the tower is the north one, where the staircase occurs (see sketch). The vertical lines of the staircase, in the form of a slightly projecting square tower, show out to good effect against the richer parts of the north and east sides of the main tower.

The arcading of the nave is in four bays, with Beer stone moulded piers and arches, and carved caps to each pier. The character of this work, which is rather coarse in detail—especially the carving—points to the fact that this arcading (and consequently the south aisle) was constructed rather later than the tower—probably about 1500-10 (Henry VII.-VIII.), in the Early Tudor period. The best of the carving occurs in the canopied double-niche on the second pier from the east (fig. 3). A walled-up old doorway shows in the north wall (see sketch plan). The level of the churchyard is considerably above the bottom of the doorway, so that either a flight of steps must formerly have led up from the latter, or the churchyard must have been lower than now. This north entrance was probably blocked up

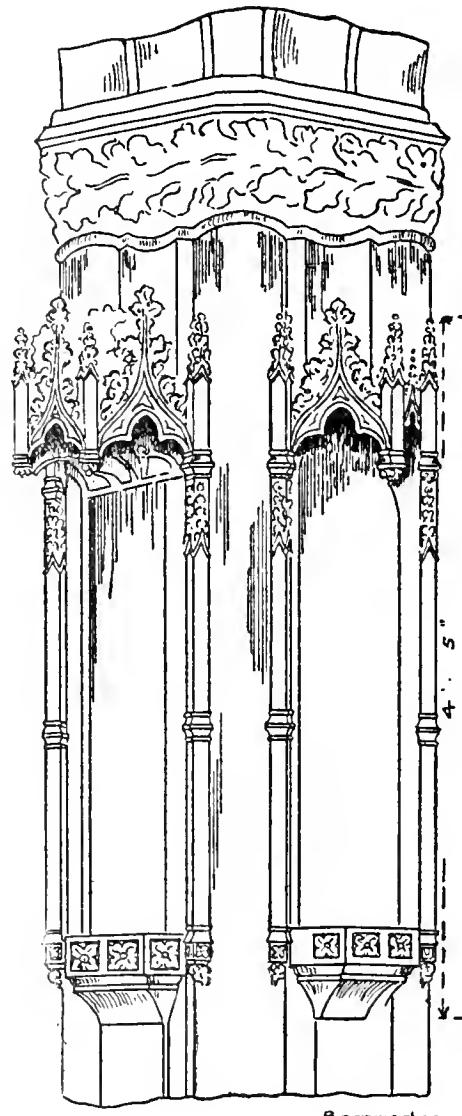


FIG. 3

Berry narbor

when the south porch was built, as being no longer required. The porch has an old oak cradle roof, with carved bosses, apparently of Early 16th century date, therefore the aisle and porch may have been built at about the same time. The windows in the north and south walls of the church are of Perpendicular design, some having stained glass—the one at the extreme west end of the south wall being a memorial window, erected in 1883 to Miss Basset, of Watermouth Castle.

The tower screen is of oak, in Perpendicular style, in three bays, with carved cornice and spandrels; and the vestry screen is also of oak, in Tudor style. The reredos is of plain design in stone, and the font is of stone—the basin being modern, in the Norman style, mounted on what appears to be an old Norman stem. There is a trefoiled shaped piscina in the south wall of the chancel of possible Late Early English date, and it bears traces of coloring.

The roofs of the nave, chancel and aisle are good examples of modern oak open-timbered cradle roofs, relieved with carved bosses. The overhanging south side of the chancel roof, caused by the set-back of the arcading from the line of the chancel south wall, has been cleverly contrived to rest on a large stone corbel over the second pier from the east.

The ancient monuments are not very numerous, but some are very interesting. On the north wall of the nave is one to "Richard Berrie, Lord of the Manor of Berrie Nerbert, died 1645" (Charles I.). It contains four kneeling figures, representing Berrie, his wife, son and daughter. Another, on the same wall, is in the Renaissance style, showing the kneeling figure of a man in prayer; but the lettering on the inscription slab is quite gone. Judging from the style of the costume—(Charles II.)—it may be a monument to a former rector—George Westcott, who held the living in the middle of the 17th century. A curious monumental slab on the north wall of the chancel is that to "E.C.—Rector 1725" (George I.). It is to Edward Chichester, who was instituted to the living in 1716. On referring to the sketch (fig. 2) it will be seen that the rector's name is not at all prominent, and for brevity this inscription could hardly be beaten. A memorial slab is fixed on the south wall of the chancel to "Mary, only daughter of George Westcott, Pastor of the Church, and of Frances his wife, died 1648, aged 7." It bears the following poetical inscription:—

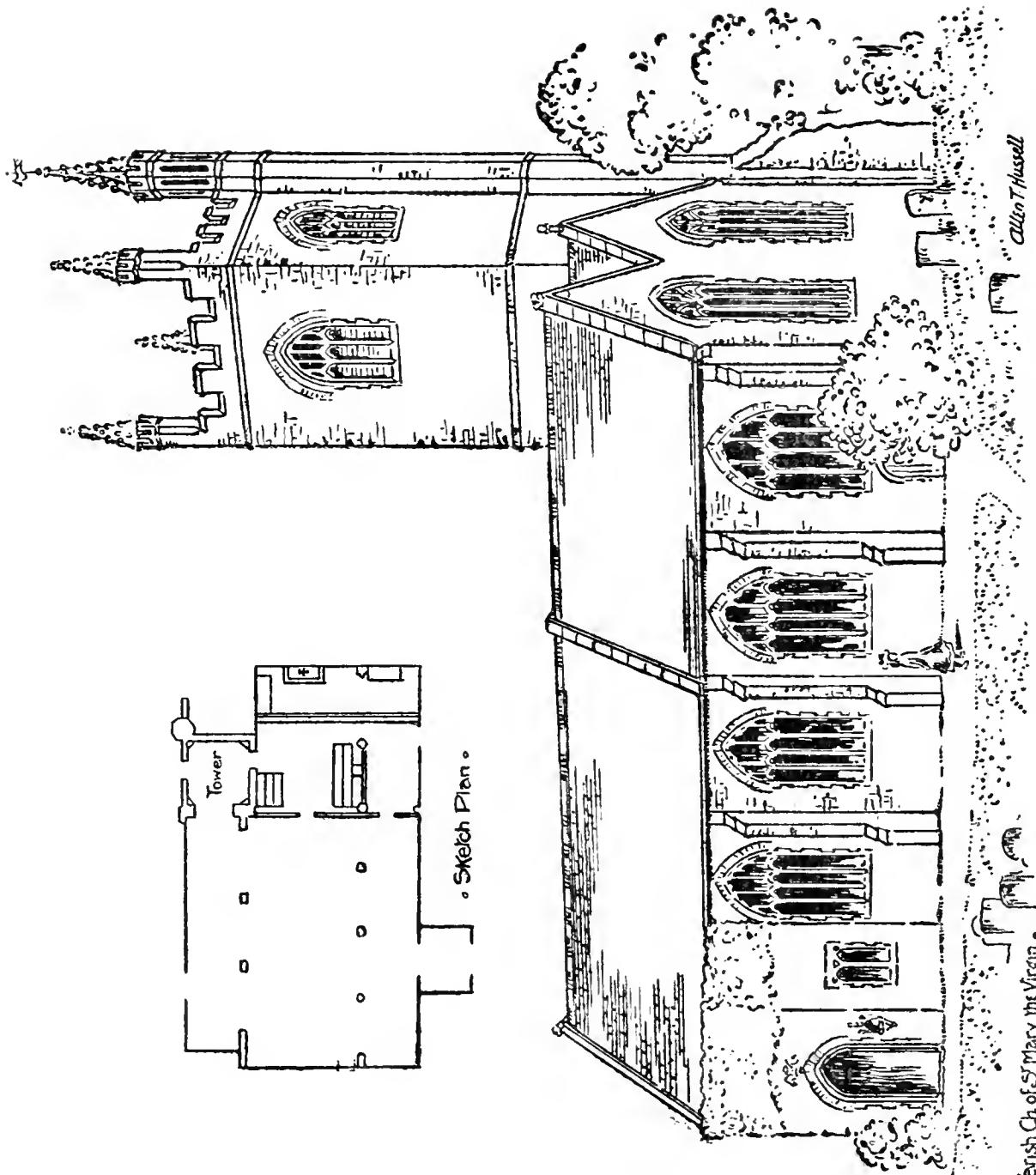
"This Mary—gold to here doth shew,
MARIE, worth gold lies neer below.
Cut downe by death the fair'st-gilt flowr,
Flourish, and fade doth in an hour
The Marygold in sunshine spread
(When cloudie) closd doth bow the head
This orient plant retains its guise
With splendent Sol to set and rise

Een so this virgin Marie-Rose
In life soon nipt, in death fresh growes
With Christ her light shee set in paine
By Christ her Lord she'll rise againe
When shee shall shine more bright by farr
Then any twinkling radiant starre
For bee assured that by deths dart
MARY enjoyes the better part."

The register begins at 1540, but the names of the Rectors cannot be traced back beyond 1603. The following is the list from that date:—

LIST OF RECTORS.

1603—William Hearle.	1730—Robert Bluet.
1631—George Westcott.	1751—John Seddon.
1651—Richard Parker (during Commonwealth).	1776—Powell Edwards.
1664—George Westcott.	1834—Samuel Thomas Slade Gully.
1674—Henry Chichester.	1860—Walter Fursdon.
1716—Edward Chichester.	1876—John Manley Hawker.
1884—Reginald Churchill.	



Parish Ch of St. Mary the Virgin.
Pillaton. from the S.E. • Mar 1908 •



Pilton.

Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin.

ALTHOUGH Pilton Church stands on solid rock enough, yet Pilton Town—according to Leland's description of it in his day—was a place that “stondith on cloth”! However, Pilton now partly stands on “Gloves,” “Collars” and general trade, and is very pleasantly situated to the north-west of Barnstaple, overlooking the beautiful estuary of the river Taw, with “Kingsley's Country” away to the south-west. The western part of the town, in which the church is situated, is outside the borough of Barnstaple, but the eastern portion is within it. Pilton has a very long history, dating back over a thousand years.

The church is of very great interest, and is stated to have been formerly attached to the Benedictine Priory, founded, according to Leland, by King Athelstan, A.D. 925-940. This is certain, for an impression of the seal of the Priory is still in existence. This Priory was in 1261 (Henry III.) and previously, a cell to the Abbey of Malmesbury. The north aisle and lower part of the tower of the existing church formed part of the Early English church of the Priory, but the first church connected with it would, of course, have been Saxon, and very probably of timber construction. The present church at Pilton consists of a chancel with south aisle, nave with north and south aisles, south porch, and an embattled eastern tower with pinnacles, containing a clock and a fine peal of eight bells, dating from 1712 (Anne) to 1853. It can accommodate 600 persons, and the interior length is 96 feet, and the width 57 feet 4 inches. From 1873 to 1890 it was restored at a cost of £1,261, and the register dates from the year 1569 (Elizabeth). The most interesting part of the structure is the ground storey of the tower, with its groined entrance and remains of a vaulted interior. This and the north aisle are of distinctly Early English period—about 1260—(Henry III.) A sketch is given (fig. 1) of the archway, showing the groining and acutely pointed arch—both very valuable relics and very rare for this part of Devon. It is finished at the floor with a plinth projecting about three inches, which has been cut off on the chancel or south side of the wall, and there are traces of its having been hacked away or otherwise damaged on the righthand side going in from the chancel. The existence of this plinth goes a long way to prove that the tower originally stood outside the building, and that the archway very probably formed the chief entrance to the church, and on through the tower into the Priory; the plinth being an exterior feature, and cut away on the chancel side when the latter was built, so as to obtain a plain surface. Some of the quoin stones in the jambs of the archway are of the same stone as that found in the exterior quoins of the lower or Early English

part of the tower. The jambs are chamfered, and finished at the bottom with "broach" stops. The ground storey (now used as the vestry) was originally vaulted, as can be seen by the pillars, 8 feet 8 inches high, at each corner, which are still intact with their caps and bases. The western arch is open, and under it the organ stands, but the eastern arch is walled up. Beyond the latter arch was undoubtedly the chancel of the Priory Church, and the ruined wall abutting on the east face of the octagonal projecting tower staircase was evidently a part of it, for the walling is of the same description as that of the remaining 13th century work. Probably the old chancel had become very dilapidated, and so when the present chancel was built it was taken down and the arch filled in. Just above the belfry floor the interior of the tower is octagonal, carried on squint arches, and continuing thus up to the bottom of the bell windows, where it becomes a square. The octagonal plan of this older portion indicates that the tower may have originally carried an octagonal spire,

similar to the broached spires of Barnstaple and Braunton churches, but of lower altitude. During the Civil War, Barnstaple was occupied by the King's forces, from September, 1644, to April, 1646, Sir Allen Apsley having been appointed Governor of Barnstaple in 1645. At this period the upper part of the tower was pulled down by Sir Allen, mention of which is made by him in a letter to Sir Edward Hyde, Chancellor of the Exchequer, dated December 20th, 1644, in which he says ". . . I am forced to pull down the steeple." His reason for so doing was that he anticipated that no doubt the enemy (the Parliamentarians) would, if they could have obtained possession of the tower, have used it for placing their artillery upon it, which of course would have been an excellent position. There is a tradition that when the Parliamentarians held Barnstaple in 1646 the tower was battered down by the guns fired from the fort, situated 1,500 yards away; but this can be a tradition only, for from that distance the guns of the time would not have had sufficient power to destroy it, for the walls are about five feet in thickness, and the church generally would have suffered; but there are no records of this having been the case, nor are there any traces of such damage to be seen in the structure nor the roof timbers.

The tower remained partly demolished for 50 years, and in 1696 (William III.) it was re-built. Above the south porch is a tablet recording this fact, the inscription being as follows:—

"The Tower of this Parish being by force of Arms pul'd down in ye late unhappy Civil Wars Anno Dom. 1646 was rebuilt 1696.
Wm. Downe, Esq.
Christopher Lethbridge, Gent,
John Avery.
John Rogers.
Wm. Langdon
George Lee
Church-Wardens:
Robert Nutting.

Mr. Builder."

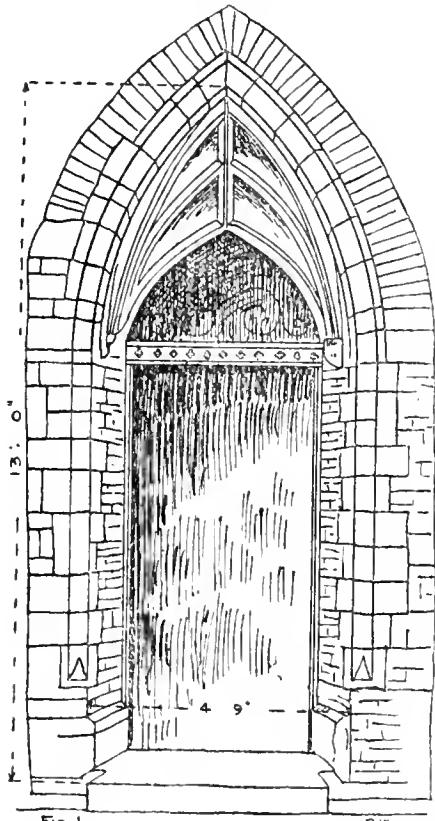


FIG. I

The inscription is somewhat misleading in the way that it is worded, but the inscriber evidently meant in stating that it was "pul'd down" by "force of Arms," that this was one of the fortunes of war resulting from the wishes of those in command of the army and at the head of affairs, and therefore not necessarily meaning that instruments of warfare were used to destroy the tower. The words "pul'd down" would hardly have been used if it had been demolished by gun fire. On reading the inscription, it is interesting to note how some of the surnames have survived in Barnstaple and the district to this day. "Robert Nutting. Mr. Builder," no doubt means that he was the "master-builder" of the tower when it was rebuilt. In 1845 the parapet was taken down and battlements substituted, a large turret erected at the north-east corner for the clock bell, and in 1850 the remaining three pinnacles were erected. The clock has no face, and was made in 1713 (Anne). The bells have inscriptions on them. That on the fourth reads thus quaintly :—

" This Bell was cast by John Taylor & Son
Who the best prize for Church Bells won
In the great Ex-hi-bi-ti-on
of 1-8-5 and 1.

Loughborough 1853."

The height of the tower from lowest ground level to the top of the embattlements is 77 feet 6 inches; the three pinnacles rise another 12 feet, and the bell turret 15 feet. The measurement from out to out of the embattlements is 23 feet 3 inches square.

It is supposed that the cloisters of the Priory were along the north wall of the present north aisle, and that the three-light square-headed Tudor windows now in this wall were originally in the cloisters: and this is very probable, for the suppression of the monasteries did not occur until the Tudor period, or Henry VIII.'s reign, so that these windows were no doubt the last that were erected in the Priory buildings. They contain some small portions of the old glass. On the north wall of the tower are some very old projecting stones, which are no doubt the original weathering stones over the roof of the Priory building at this spot; and as they are of considerable height above the ground, they show that the buildings must have been of an extensive nature.

The roof of the north aisle was originally much lower than at present, for a lancet window in the west wall of the tower shows below the roof. This window—now blocked up—would formerly have been outside and overlooking the old roof, which was very probably a steep "span" roof, with eaves north and south, built, of course, clear of the west arch of the tower; and at that time the aisle was the nave of the Early English church, and its south wall—now pierced by the arcading—would have had windows. The present nave and chancel were evidently constructed in the Early Decorated period, about 1320 (Edward II.-III.), for the arcading of the north aisle is of the type common in Devon churches of that period—equilateral arches, the piers and arches left quite plain, resembling the 14th century arches found in Ilfracombe and Braunton churches and elsewhere.

Further, the chancel roof is an old Decorated one—an open-timbered roof, left quite plain, without ribs or carving. Judging from the arcading, the south aisles of the nave and chancel were built about the middle of the 16th century, the

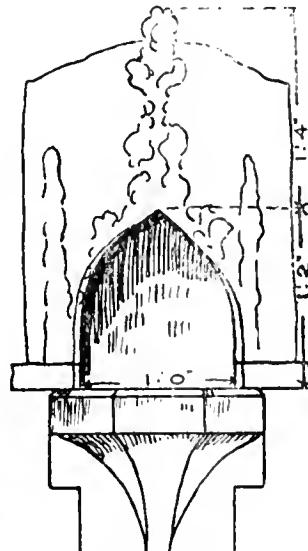
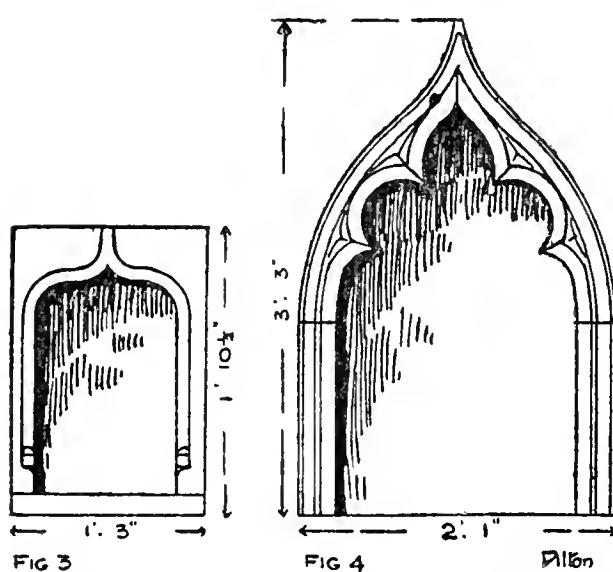


FIG 2

arches being of a depressed form, and the carving and mouldings coarse in detail and indicating Late Tudor work. The roof of the north aisle bears the date "1639" (Charles I.), and as the remaining roofs throughout—except the chancel—are of similar detail and form, it is very probable that the nave and south aisle were re-roofed at the same time as the north aisle. They are all cradle roofs, with moulded ribs and lightly carved bosses. The panels were formerly plastered, but in 1873 they were filled in with boarding. When the roof of the north aisle was put on, the walls were raised and the before mentioned Tudor windows from the Priory cloisters inserted high up in the north wall. Projecting below the wall plates of the roofs are wood brackets, which no doubt originally bore carved angel figures, and some old stone corbels showing below the wall plates were built in to support the plates. The detail of the south porch indicates that it is contemporary with the south aisle. It has a Late Tudor two-light window in the east wall, and a well proportioned and moulded inner archway in freestone, with rather grotesquely carved figures as stops to the label mould. The inner, or aisle side of the arch, is very skilfully built in local rubble stone. On the outside of the south wall of the

porch, to the right of the archway, is a holy-water stoup of ogee form (fig. 2), parts of the carved crocketed shafts still remaining. The shelf or corbel is modern. There is also a stoup in the south wall of the church near the porch, being a plain opening 1 foot 8 inches wide, 2 feet high, and 1 foot 3 inches deep. It was discovered about ten years ago.

St. Margaret's Hospital at Pilton is a very old institution, founded in the 12th century as a Leper Hospital, and would be contemporary with the Leper Hospital which existed at Taddiport, Little Torrington. It was still used for the lepers in the 14th century, and as structural evidence shows that the nave of the church is of 14th

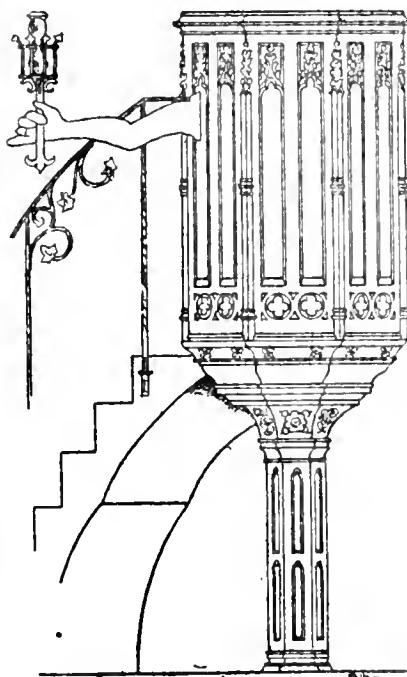


century date, it is just possible that the recess in its west wall is a "leper-squint," although it must be mentioned that it is considerably above the height of a man from the present ground level. There is said to have been a "leper-squint" where the monument to Sir Robert Chichester stands, at the north wall of the chancel. Authorities differ as to whether leper-windows ever existed as such at all, as lepers were not allowed to enter the precincts of the church. It has been suggested that they were possibly apertures through which an acolyte would ring the Sanctus bell at week-day Masses, and that their proper name is "Low-side wiudows." There is a trace of an old western doorway to the nave showing on the outside of the wall. In the east wall of the chancel is an old arch of Early English form, possibly at one time a priest's doorway in a part of the Early English church, and when the chancel was built, put in where it now stands. (It may have been originally a doorway in the north wall of the old chancel, which formerly stood east of the tower.)

The chancel retains an old Decorated piscina (fig. 4), and the south side of the chancel (known as the Raleigh Chapel) has a piscina of Tudor date (fig. 3), showing that an altar once stood here. In the north aisle are some old stone corbels of Italian Renaissance design, date about 1600. They bear traces of colour, and

may have been used to support lamps for lighting this part of the church. The font cover (fig. 6) is of oak, of very charming outline and detail ; octagonal, with concave crocketted ribs terminating in a very beautiful poppy-head, with band just below it. The spandrels between the ribs, and also the upright panelling, are carved in different patterns. The canopy and its panelling are in oak, very elaborate, but lacking in delicacy of detail. The main and diagonal ribs are spiral, and bordered with cresting, with bosses at the intersections ; the cornice having a carved vignette moulding, with undulating branch and foliage, finished below with cresting. The pediments over the hood are very crude, and appear to be of much later date than the rest of the work. The carving in the upright panels is superior to that in the hood, and is quite detached from the backing. The two lowest panels have the "linen pattern" worked on them—rarely found in Devon. The whole of the canopy is painted, which is unfortunate, as a hard effect is produced. Judging from the mixture of Gothic and Italian detail in the font cover and canopy, they are of date about 1580 (Elizabethan), and the font would also date from then. The pulpit (fig. 5) is of stone, and probably dates from the Late Tudor period—about 1550 (Edward VI.—Mary). It bears the Tudor Rose carving in the coved portion above the pedestal, and a curiosity is the iron arm and hand holding a stand with hour-glass.

The old oak screen, which formerly supported a rood loft, is 40 feet 10 inches long, and 12 feet 6 inches high, and stretches across the chancel and south aisle. It is in ten bays, with the usual four reticulated divisions to each bay. The lower panels show traces of painted figures, and about 12 inches of the front groining ribs are still left, rising from carved angel figures, but no other traces of the groining which carried the roof-loft remain. When the removal of these lofts over the chancel screens took place in the 16th century, this screen was possibly left some time with the upper part in a ruined condition, and then it was built up again with a queer mixture of old pieces of traceried panelling in the spandrels of the arches, old carved vignette cornice, and cresting of ogee-shaped crocketted pieces. The parclose screen is in three bays, being 12 feet 4 inches long, and 10 feet 2 inches high, and in a good state of preservation. It has a well carved cornice and cresting (portions of which are missing), and the spandrels are in undercut carving, planted on a background ; one of the spandrels having the letter R carved on it, which probably stands for Raleigh, as the screen is in the Raleigh Chapel. The west bay has a curious opening or door in its lower part, which may have been used for the distribution of alms and bread, which were formerly given away in the church. Stretching across the full width of the chancel and aisle is a very fine old Elizabethan altar rail, with a top forming a book rest. The detail of its pillars corresponds with that of the pillars on the monument to Sir John Chichester and wife in the Raleigh Chapel, who died in 1569 and 1566 (Elizabeth) respectively. This monument is a superb specimen of Elizabethan Renaissance work, in Beer stone, with panelled strapwork, fluted and reeded pillars with carved caps, pediment, and numerous coats-of-arms. Another monument is that to Sir Robert Chichester, against the north wall of the chancel, of massive construction, in the Classic style. Sir Robert was twice married, and died in 1627 (Charles I.). On the monument are



large figures, supposed to represent him and his two wives, a grown-up daughter, and two children—a boy and a girl. A very large mural monument is in the south aisle of the nave, to Christopher Lethbridge and his family, erected by himself during his lifetime, and under his own supervision. He died in 1713 (Anne) at the age of 59. His wife was Margaret, the daughter of Phillip Bowchier. The middle part of the monument is in the shape of a large turtle, the inscription in Latin being on its back; and above is the coat-of-arms of the Lethbridge and Bowchier families quartered, and at the head the coat-of-arms of the Lethbridge family. The oldest inscription in the church is that found on a stone beneath the monument to Sir Robert Chichester, in the chancel. It is in Latin, the translation of which reads: "Pray for the soul of Richard Chichester, Esquire, who died on the 24th day of the month of December, in the year of our Lord 1494. On whose soul God have mercy." There are two small brasses in the chancel aisle dated "1534" and "1540" (Henry VIII.), in a remarkably good state of preservation, owing partly to their having been covered by the organ, which used to stand there. The inscriptions on them are to Robert and Alexander Bret, who were supposed to have been connected with the Priory as stewards.

In the vestry is an old Pitch-Pipe, which was used for 150 years to start the music. The absence of entirely straight and vertical lines in Pilton Church is very noticeable. "One curious feature of the church is that nothing is straight and nothing is upright. The whole of the pillars and the pulpit on the south side are leaning, and the chancel roof is much out of line with the arch. The screen is leaning to the right to match with the great pillar dividing the chancel from the south chancel aisle, and the nave and chancel are by no means in a straight line."* Possibly some of this irregularity was done emblematically, for the old builders had many strange beliefs and superstitions. Combe Martin Church inclines to the north; and there is a tradition that the old builders sloped their churches in this direction because our Lord's head upon the cross was so inclined; and one continually comes across nave piers leaning to the north and south respectively, forming a shape like the hull of a ship, and which is supposed to be emblematical of the church being the Ark of God. To conclude, it would be difficult to find a more interesting church than Pilton, both from a historical and architectural point of view.

PRIORS OF PILTON.

1200—Ralph, whose name occurs in a deed respecting the Lepers' House.

1261—Adam de Betesleghe.

1282—Richard de Iweleghie.

1283—John de Stanleghe.

1311—William Wrockeshale.

1316—Henry de Pekyngehull.

1336—John de Lockynham.

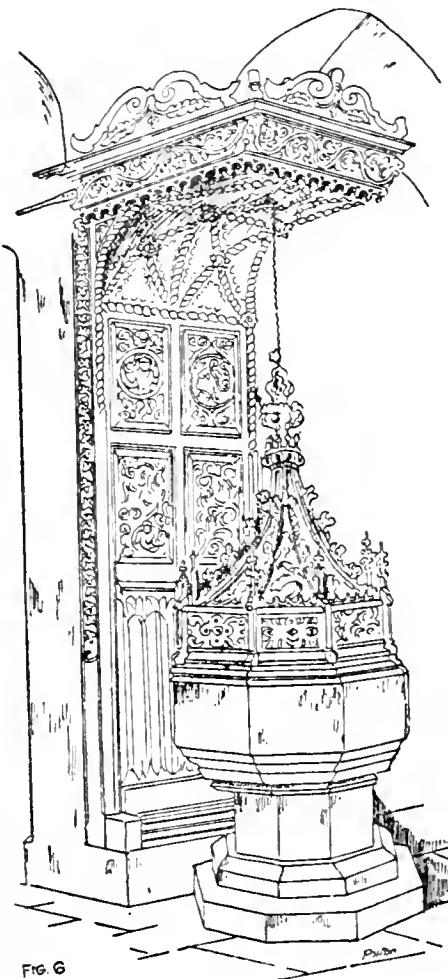


FIG. 6

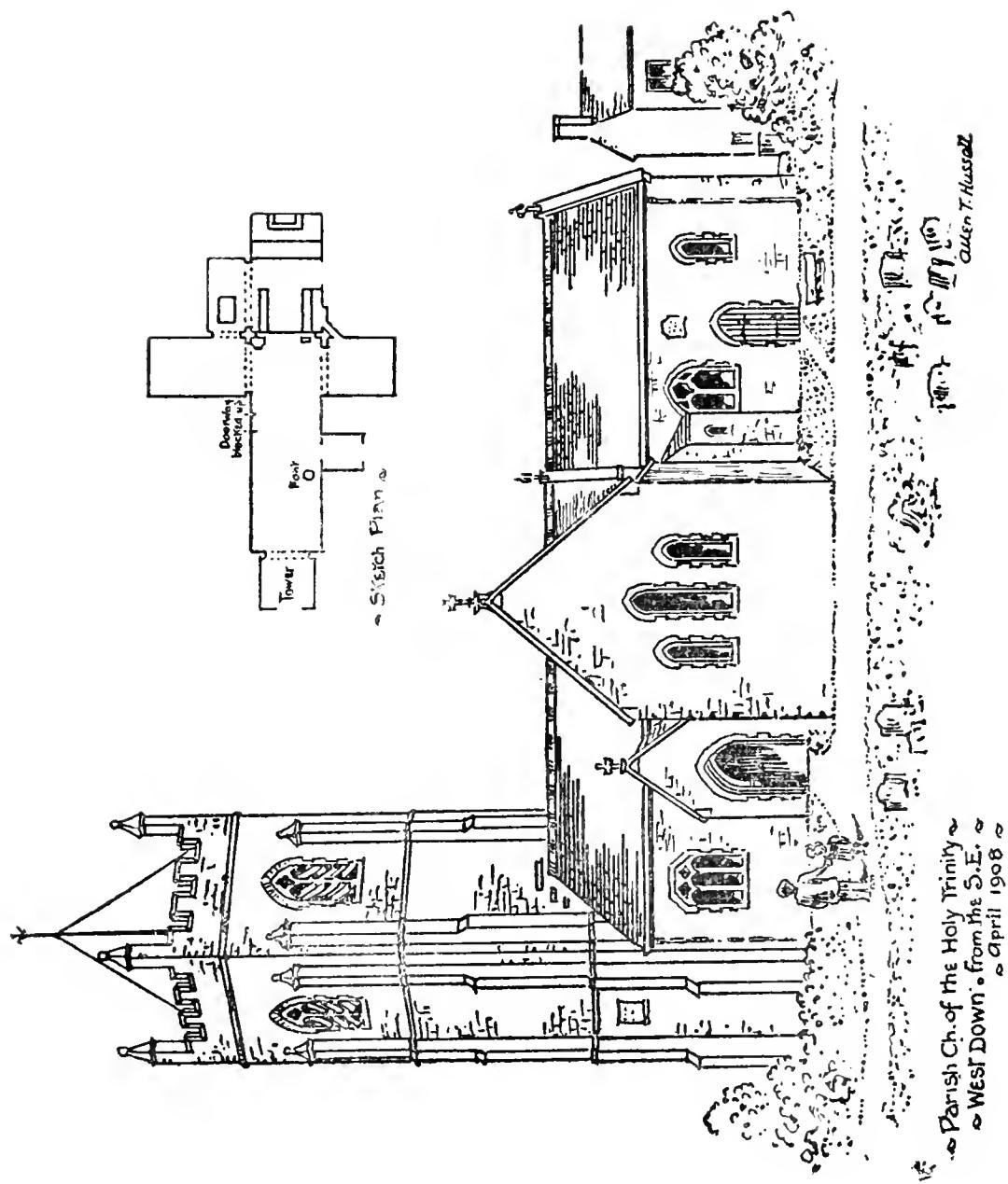
PRIORS OF PILTON (Continued).

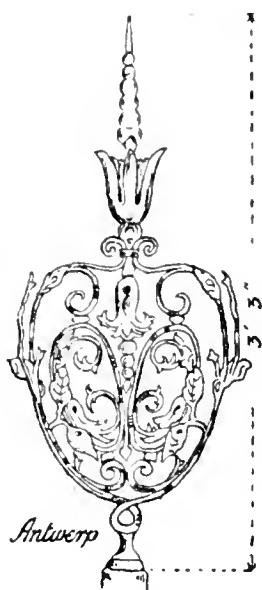
1349—Simon de Aveneye (became Abbot of Malmesbury the same year).	1457—Robert Upton.
1349—John de Rodeborne.	1472—Thomas Oldeston.
1362—Thomas Brockenborwe.	?—William Kyngswode.
1397—John.	1502—John Bewmont.
1398—William Charleton.	1513—William Alday.
1412—Richard Kengeswode.	1517—Simon Rumsey.
1421—Thomas Evesham.	1527—John Rosse, the last Prior.
1434—William Worcester.	(Dissolution and Tithes impropriated in Henry VIII.'s reign.)
1446—John Andover.	

INCUMBENTS OF PILTON SINCE 1600.

1600—Joseph Smyth.	1726—John Whitlocke, B.A.
1605—Morgan Davies.	1763—Hooper Morrison, M.A.
1613—Francis Shaxton.	1767—John Spurway, B.A.
1614—Nicholas Shukstone.	1772—William Spurway, M.A.
1616—Roger Bowcher.	1837—William Cradock Hall, M.A.
1651—Joseph Eyres.	1843—Richard Hayne, B.D.
1681—James Elmeston.	1850—William Cradock Hall, M.A.
1695?—John Harder.	1889—William Ewer Ryan, M.A.
1715—Christopher Lantrow.	1892—William Henry Morris Bagley, M.A.





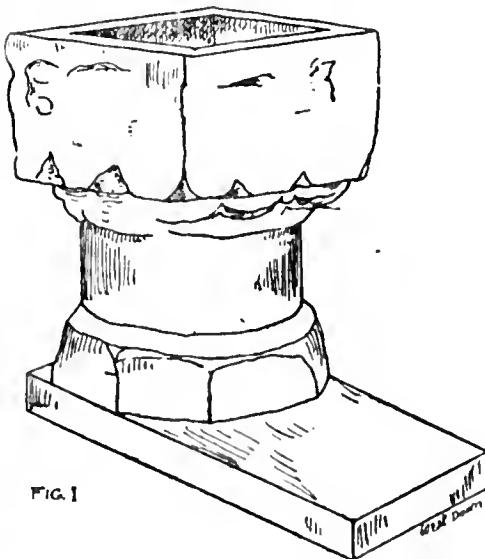


Westdown.

Parish Church of the Holy Trinity.

HE little village of Westdown is a place rather apt to be lost sight of by the casual visitor to North Devon, as it is rather out of the usual tourist routes ; but it and its church are well worth a visit to those who like a trudge in bracing air across the downs, which stretch southwards, several hundred feet above sea-level, from the back of Ilfracombe ; the village being four miles from that town and three from Mortehoe railway station. The church, owing to the large amount of 14th century work it contains, is of more than usual interest, and resembles in this respect the larger church of Tawstock. On a site adjoining the eastern end of the churchyard is an old house, formerly a manor house, dating from about 1580-1600, which has a large room on the ground floor, with a richly modelled plaster ceiling, elaborate figure work over the fireplace, and oak panelling. This room ranks with the finest of its kind in the county.

The church is built at the eastern end of the village, and in this open, undulating country, its tower forms a very prominent landmark. On plan it consists of a nave, chancel and vestry, north and south transepts, south porch and western tower, giving a cruciform plan. The combined length of the nave and chancel is 74 feet 6 inches; the width of the nave 15 feet 6 inches; and the width across from end to end of transepts, 56 feet 10 inches. A tablet on the chancel south wall states that the chancel was rebuilt in 1675 (Charles II.), and also a tablet on the tower states that the tower was taken down to the foundations in 1711,



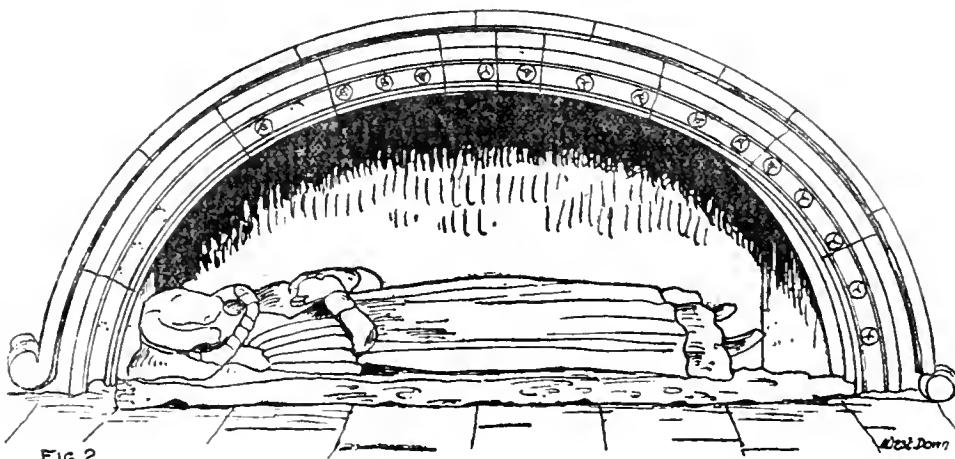


FIG. 2

and rebuilt in 1712 (Anne). The church was restored in 1874, and the chancel walls raised, new roofing and seating put throughout the church, and the chancel repaired at a total cost of £1,785. There are 230 sittings, and the registers date from the year 1583 (Elizabeth).

The first church was no doubt of Norman date, for the font is Norman, and the tower arch—although rebuilt with the rest of the tower in 1712—is semi-circular, quite plain, without mouldings, and built of large dressed stones. It may very possibly be a copy—as to form, if not to height—of the former arch, and indicates that the tower may have been Norman, and the stones forming the present arch may be from the previous arch.

The font (fig. 1) was found under the floor during the restoration of the church. It is of stone, and has evidently passed through some rough times. It is not very pretty, but can boast of being some 800 years or so old, and has a coating of buff colouring, put on some years ago to try to improve its hoary appearance perhaps.

The narrow, aisleless nave, and the south transept, (judging from the arch of the latter), are probably of Early Decorated date—about 1320 (Edward II.-III.), and the transept may have been used as a chapel at one time. It was probably enlarged when the chancel was rebuilt in 1675, as the arch is not in the centre of the width; and at the same time, the slanting arched opening—somewhat resembling a screen hagioscope—was formed next to the chancel arch, to give a view of the altar to persons seated in the transept; for its use as a chantry chapel would have expired at the before mentioned date. The vertical and undecayed condition of its south wall shows later work still. This wall was possibly rebuilt and raised higher in 1874, to suit the pitch of the new roofs.

The most interesting part of the church is the north transept—a specimen of pure Late Decorated work, containing some good detail. Oliver states that it “doubtless formed the chantry founded by the late Prior of Wales, to find a pryste to pray for the sowle of Sir John Stowford, Knight (one of the benefactors of the Priory of Wales), in the Parish Church of West Down.” He was born at Stowford, in the parish of Westdown, about 1290 (Edward I), and was a Justice of the Common Pleas from 1342 to about 1372 (reigns of Edward III. and Richard II.). His oaken effigy is here in the

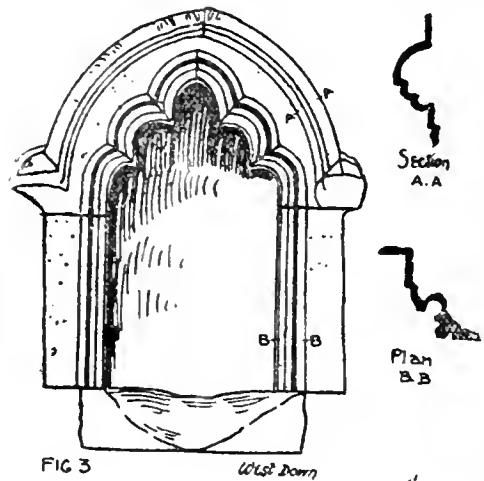


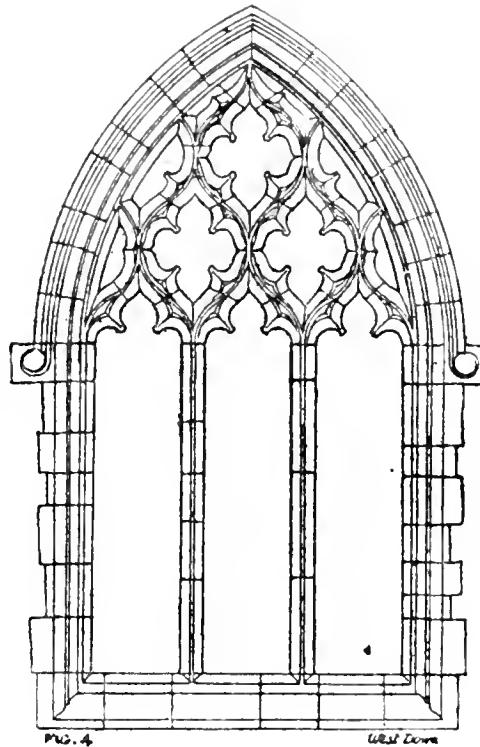
FIG 3

West Down

transept, lying on the floor under a semi-elliptical arched recess in the north wall (fig. 2). It probably surmounted an altar-tomb in this recess, but no trace of the tomb now exists. In the north wall of the nave, close to the transept, is an old Early Decorated doorway, blocked up, which would have been a north entrance to the church before the south entrance and its porch were constructed. At that time the floor of the church may have been lower than at present, two or three steps down, and this would have given ample height for the altar tomb. (A similar arched recess, but quite plain, is to be found in the north wall of the north transept of Braunton Church; and this may have contained an altar tomb, the floor of that church being apparently at its original level, with steps up to the entrances, leaving the recess higher than that in Westdown Church.) The effigy is life-size, and in a very good state of preservation considering its age, and should be regarded, from the rarity of such oaken reliques, as of great value. It depicts Sir John in the attitude of prayer, and dressed in the robes of a sergeant-at-law. The colouring on it was renewed in 1873. There was also an effigy of his wife Joan, but it is lost. The arch is of stone (probably Beer), having a well proportioned series of Decorated mouldings and label, ornamented with the ball flower, some of which are missing. The semi-elliptical form of the arch is rather unusual for Decorated work. The wall is very thick, built so as to allow for the depth of the recess, and it contains a beautiful three-light Decorated or 14th century window, with flowing tracery (fig. 4). The form of the tracery shows that the transept was built in the Late Decorated period. (Tawstock Church has similar windows in the transepts.) The piscina (fig. 3)—now in the chancel and used as a credence niche—was formerly in the east wall of the north transept or Stowford Chapel. It is a very charming specimen of Decorated work, cinque-foiled, and well moulded. The old arch dividing the nave from the north transept is of Late Decorated date, built in two rings with hollows worked on the chamfer plane, the rings stopping down on the piers on a gradually inclined splay—very cleverly done.

The tower is 60 feet high from ground to top of battlements, is of three stages, and contains a fine peal of six bells, and a clock. It is plain and sturdy in character, buttressed at the angles; has a battlemented parapet with angle pinnacles, a western entrance with window over, and four belfry lights. The chancel formerly had a screen, but it was removed in 1815 (George III). The pulpit and desk were then placed in a different position, and more seats provided.

The north transept possesses a fine old 14th century or Decorated oak roof of unusual shape. Instead of the "cradle" form, the curved braces are brought into trefoil outline, giving a very striking effect. There is a very curious old coloured monument on the north wall of the nave to Francis Isaac and his wife Catherine, representing them with clasped hands; and beneath, a row of children is depicted.

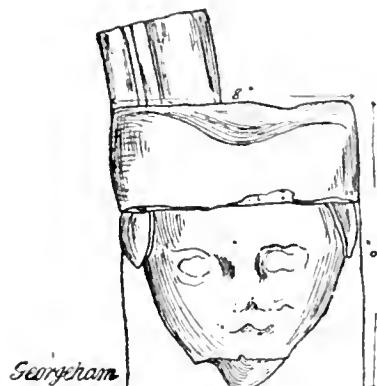


The list of Vicars shows that the parish of Westdown has had a very long history.

LIST OF VICARS FROM 1272.

1272-1288—Gervaise de Credetone.	1666-1684—Samuel Yeo.
1288-1322—Thomas de Lechlade.	1684-1700—Ben. Berry.
1323-1399—Richard de Otery.	1700-1732—Jo. Harder.
1399-1419—William Moggarygh.	1732-1748—R. Luck.
1419-1479—Thomas Lange.	1748-1772—Chas. Earle.
1479-1536—Robert Normanton.	1772-1808—Philip Elston.
1536-1583—Johannes Ball.	1808-1845—Richard Bryan.
1583-1616—Richard Chastie.	1845-1870—Henry John Drury.
1616-1635—Roger Kelly.	1870-1904—William Charles Loveband.
1635-1666—Roger Hamlin (not ejected during the Commonwealth).	1904— Hugh Lindsay Pigot.





Swymbridge.

Parish Church of St. James.

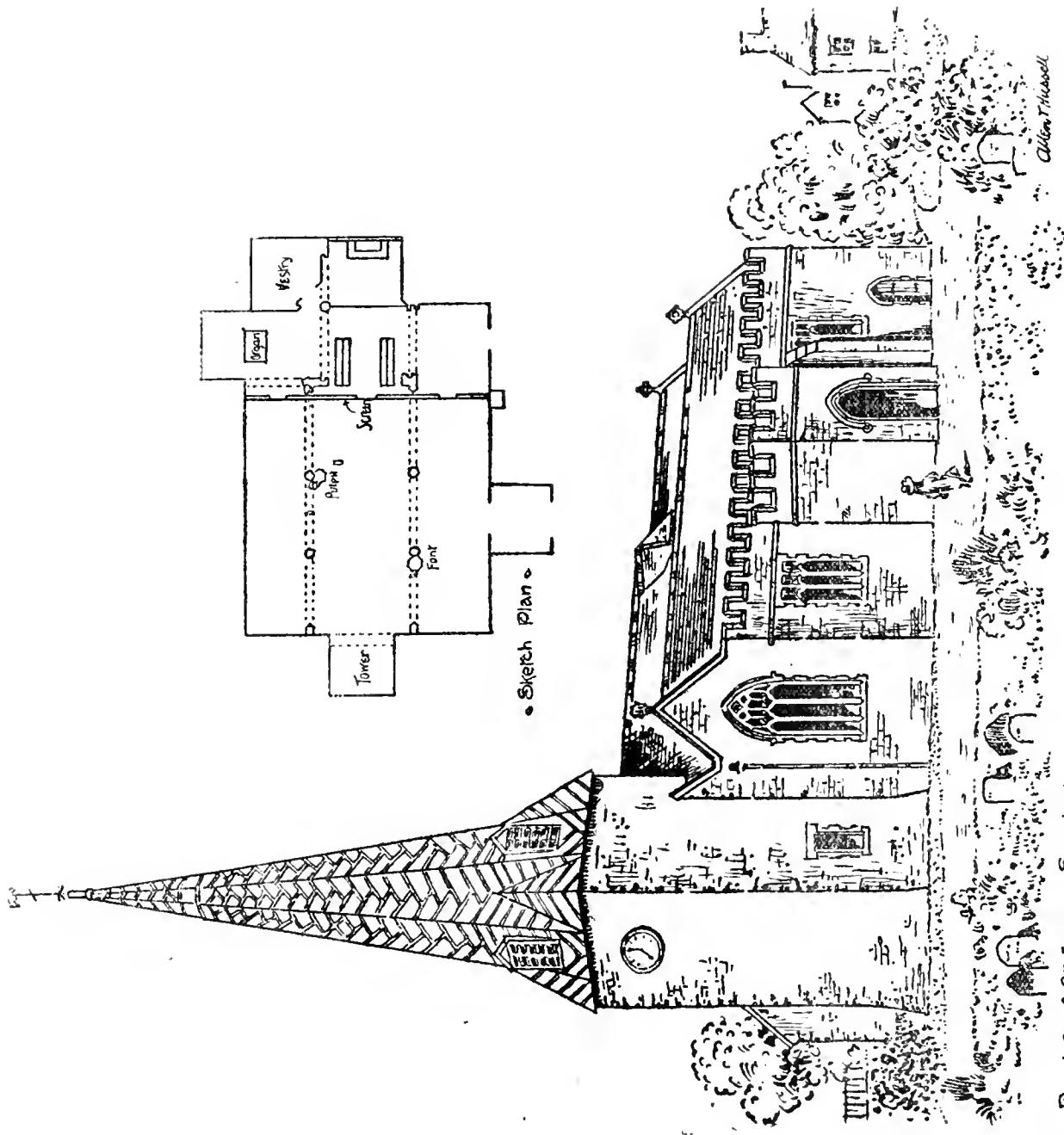


HE village of Swymbridge is about five miles east of Barnstaple, picturesquely situated in a cup-like depression at the base of a ring of low hills. The name comes from Sawin Birige. Sawin was one of the clergy of Southmolton, who founded a chapelry at Swymbridge in the days of the Saxon king, Edward the Confessor (1041-66). Sawin held lands here, the name of which was Birige. The parish was, until comparatively modern times, linked to Landkey and Newport as part of the Manor of Bishopstowton (part of the original endowment of the Bishop's See founded at Crediton A.D. 909); and the churches of Swymbridge, Landkey, and St. John Baptist, Newport (Barnstaple) were merely chapelries annexed to the parish church of Bishopstowton. Thus the mother church at Swymbridge was one dating back to Saxon times. From 1269 (Henry III.) down to the last century, Swymbridge remained a chapelry, under the charge of a perpetual curate. The first to be styled Vicar was the Rev. John Russell, in 1832.

The church is a building of considerable interest, and consists of a nave with north and south aisles, chancel and south aisle, north transept, vestry, south porch, and western steeple. The interior length is 71 feet 3 inches and the width 44 feet. It was restored in 1880, and has 250 sittings. The shortness of the body of the church in comparison with its width, is accentuated by the screen being so far west—the arrangement of the plan with regard to the sanctuary and transept necessitating this.

The oldest part is the steeple, and after that—judging from certain features—would come the walling over the south areading of the nave, then the chancel, the transept, north aisle, vestry, south aisle and porch.

The steeple is the only part left of the church which immediately preceded the present one. The form of the arch communicating with the nave, shows the tower to be of Early Decorated date, about 1310 (Edward II.-III.), and the church to which it was attached was possibly composed of the several periods from Norman to Decorated—but no traces of these now exist other than the steeple. The tower portion is of one stage only, very plain, the only noticeable features being the large interior arch and a small south window. It is possible that in the tower there was originally either a western entrance to the church or a window. It carries a lead-covered broach spire—loftier than the Braunton spire, but not so ornate and striking as that of Barnstaple. The rolls are very regularly spaced, and the spire was re-leaded a few years ago, as the lead had decayed considerably, and, at the same



• Parish Ch. of St. James at Swaybridge •
from the S.W. on April 1903 or
1904

time, the oak framing was repaired and strengthened. The spire contains a peal of six bells, and the tower has a clock with dial showing on the western face. The height of the steeple is about 90 feet.

In the Perpendicular or 15th century period, when so many of the Devon churches were rebuilt, Swymbridge Church was evidently taken in hand, the work carried out then being probably only the nave, chancel and a north aisle. In the Late Perpendicular period, about 1480 (Edward IV.), would probably have followed the construction of the transept. This, known as the Chapel of St. Bridget, and now used as the organ chamber and choir vestry, is said to owe its origin to a member of the Mules family, formerly seated at Ernesborough (now corrupted into Irishborough). It contains an old piscina of a plain description in the east wall.

After the building of the chapel, the rebuilding and widening of the north aisle would have followed. As a proof of this, there is an old canopied niche or shrine in the west side of the pier, behind the chancel screen, almost blocked up by the pier of the aisle arcading, and about two feet of plain masonry shows on the chancel pier south of the niche. This indicates that the arcading of the north aisle was originally further south, joining the chancel pier where the plain surface now is; and at that time the niche would have been exposed, and in full view of the worshippers in the aisle, as it then was. When, as is assumed, the aisle was rebuilt, the nave was widened by rebuilding the arcading further north: in consequence of which, the niche coming in the way, was unceremoniously blocked up to make room for the eastern pier of the arcading; and, at the same time, the north wall was extended outwards, and the arch between the east pier and the west wall of the transept was built, reducing this west wall to only eight feet in length. The destruction of the niche and of the figure contained in it, and the discontinuance of the transept as a chapel, would place this alteration in post-Reformation times, about 1600-50; and the vestry, with its south-west corner cut back at an angle (forming a "squint" to give worshippers in the transept a view of the altar) the arches adjacent, and also the large arch forming a recess in the north wall of the chancel, were all probably carried out at the time of the work to the north aisle. Fig. 1 shows two of the caps of the aisle piers, which are of Perpendicular conventional designs.

The south aisle, judging from the detail of the piers, was opened out soon after the north aisle was first built—possibly about the same time as the transept: but as the exterior of the walling of the south aisle is of an entirely different description to that of the rest of the church, it is evident that the walls of this aisle have been rebuilt—and that within comparatively modern times. They are faced with local sandstone, in large squared "ashlar" blocks, and are finished with an embattled parapet, the style being in debased Tudor, and the work (including the porch) possibly of eighteenth century date.

The roofs throughout the church are exceptionally good. They have been

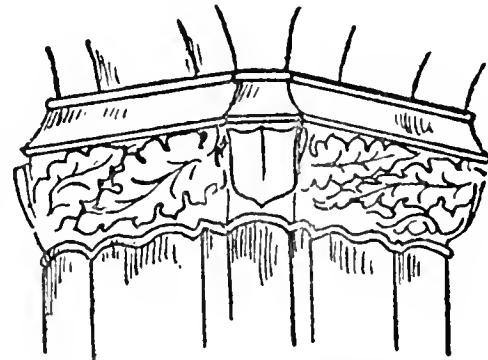
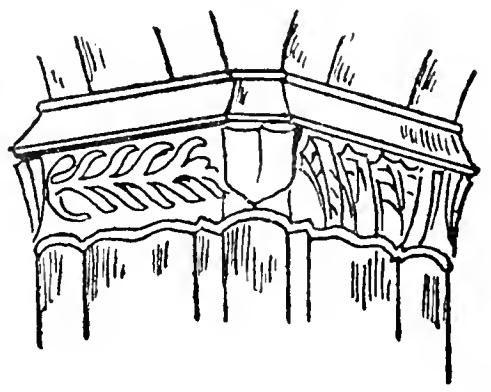


FIG. 1

Swymbridge

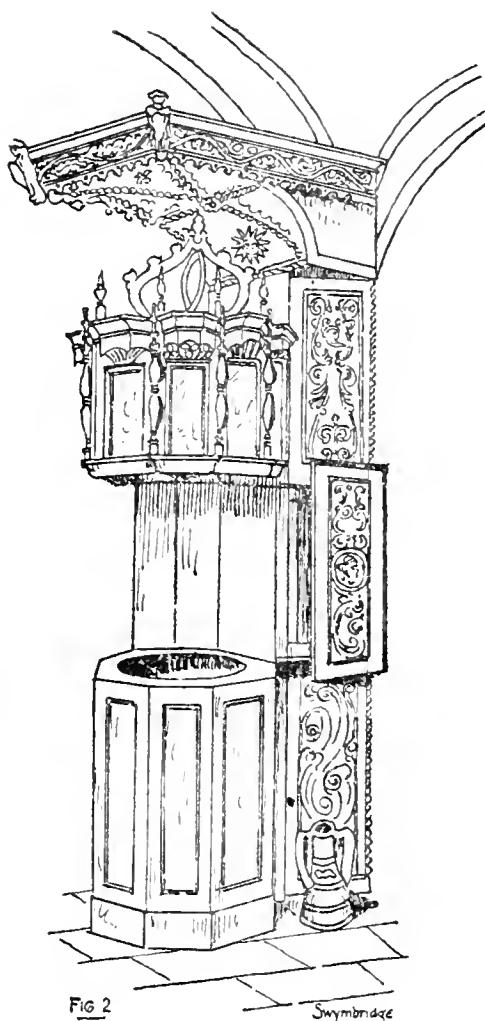


FIG 2

restored in some parts, and are of cradle form, except that of the north transept. This is a roof of a description somewhat unusual in North Devon churches. It is a flat, panelled roof, with moulded main and diagonal ribs, having boldly carved and decorated bosses—some with coats of arms of the D'Abernon, Denys, Cary, Mules, and Orchard families. The nave roof is open-timbered as far as the arches next to the chancel, and has carved ribs, forming small panels, with carved bosses. The wall plates are also elaborately carved with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, of conventional design. This roof has boarded panels for a distance of one bay back from the chancel; the ribs having margins of carved cresting, which also cross the panels diagonally. The nave aisles have similar roofs, but of later date. The oldest roof is probably that of the chancel—open-timbered, quite plain, without ribs or carving.

The rood screen, which has been considerably restored, is 44 feet in length, stretching across the full width of nave and aisles, and is 10 feet 3 inches high. It has not the grandeur of the splendid 15th century rood screen of Hartland Church, nor has it the wonderful delicacy of touch displayed in the carving of that earlier screen. Its chief characteristic is the remarkable amount of carving on the western side—no plain surface having been left except the sill. A slight touch of Renaissance design in the carving indicates that the date of the screen

would be about 1500. There are seven complete bays and six half bays. The cornice on the western side has three rows of vignette enrichment, with cresting above and below. The east side has one row of vignette, the cresting above being modern. The screen is a fully groined one, the ribs rising from carved angel figures. There is no trace of the rood-loft staircase, but possibly it went up in the south wall, where the large buttress stands. Where the screen crosses, or comes in front of the piers of the north and south aisle arcading, rectangular openings occur above the panelling (see rough sketch, fig. 4), having panelled and carved coved hoods springing from the top of the openings, and finishing under the main cornice. These two unusual openings were apparently "squints," of sufficient size (clear of the masonry piers at the back) for the clergy to have been seen when turning to the congregation during parts of the service; and it is improbable that they were intended for retables to side altars, as in that case the open rectangular panels would have been filled in. The interruption caused in the continuity of the bays of the screen by these openings is detrimental to its appearance as a whole, producing a loss of symmetry and breadth. In the little Welsh church of Partrishow (or Patricis), up in the Black Mountains of Brecknock, there is a fine screen which has similar openings to those in Swymbridge screen.

The oak canopied font (fig. 2) is peculiar, and in quite a mixture of styles. The font is of lead, encased in plain panelling down to the floor, above which are hinged

doors forming a cupboard ; and these are surmounted with an elaborate cover, in a combination of Queen Anne and Gothic styles. The canopy contains some remains of Gothic cresting and cable moulded ribs. The side panels, running up from the floor to the canopy, and the doors, are excellently carved in very refined Italian Renaissance designs.

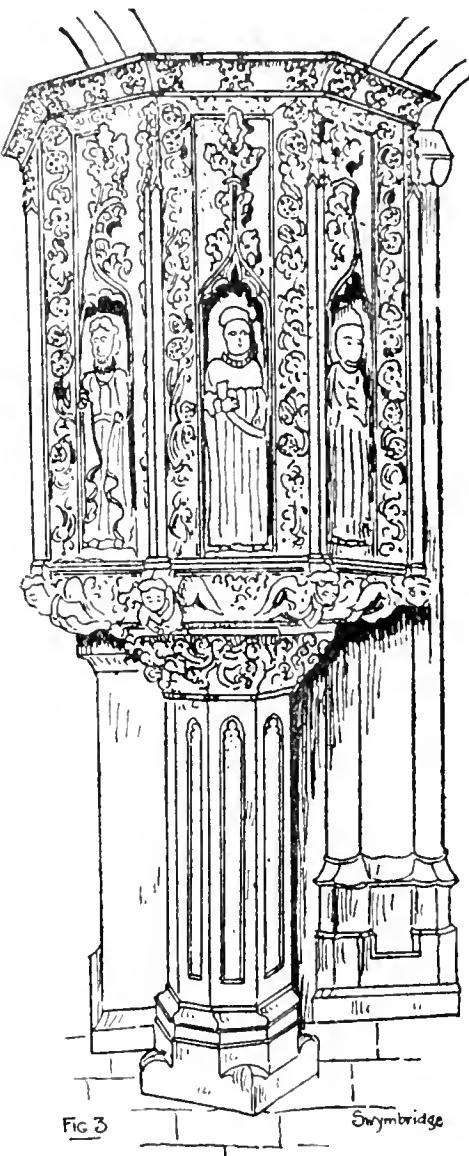
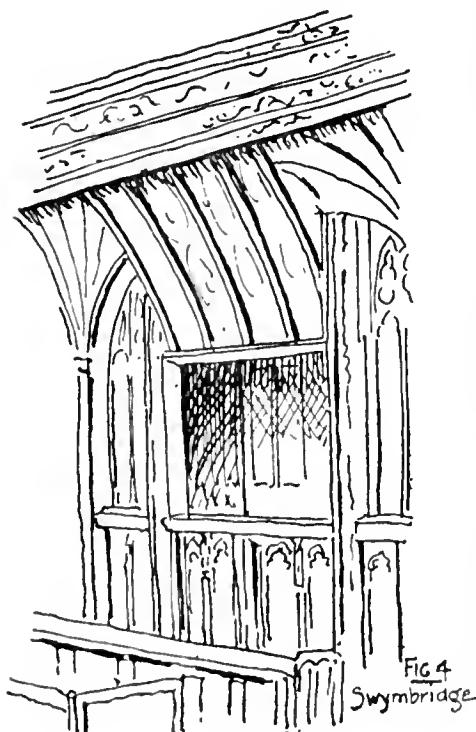
The stone pulpit (fig. 3) is perhaps the best thing in the church, from the point of view of effectiveness of design and purity of style. Its detail shows it to be of Early Tudor date, about 1490 (Henry VII.), and appears to have been very little restored. Quite distinct traces of the old colouring and gilding can be seen. Each side has a canopied and crocketed niche, in each of which are figures of saints ; the niches having floral margins, finished between with slender shafts rising from carved angel figures, acting as corbels. The pulpit stands on a slender stem, the base of which is cleverly brought out to the square at the floor level. The carving is very free and bold in execution, and very effective. The reredos is of alabaster and marble—a beautiful and elaborate specimen of modern work, in Gothic style. The seating throughout is also modern, in oak, with traceried ends, some of which have old work inserted.

There are several old monuments on the walls.

One on the south wall of the chancel aisle is to Tristram, son of Tristram Chichester, of Swym-

bridge, who died in 1654, at the age of 30. Two others are to John and Lewis Rosier, attorneys of the Courts of Common Bench and Common Pleas. The former died in 1658, and the latter in 1676. A memorial window in the east end of the south aisle is to "John Russell, 48 years vicar, buried on Ascension Day, 1883, aged 87." This was the famous hunting vicar, "Parson Jack Russell," who held the living at Swymbridge, kept his own pack of hounds, and was an intimate friend of our King, H.M. Edward VII. He was, as is before stated, the first Vicar of Swymbridge, and spent nearly the whole of his clerical career there.

The Parish Registers commence baptisms and burials in 1562 ; marriages in 1563. From this



date, with the exception of the years 1653-59, they are in a very perfect condition. Amongst the church plate is a very fine chalice of Elizabethan style, dated 1576, the work of T. Matthew, goldsmith, of Exeter, who made many of the North Devon chalices.

The sketch of the church is from the south-west, from which point it looks most uncommon and striking, owing to the plainness of the tower as contrasting with the more ornamental parts of the building.

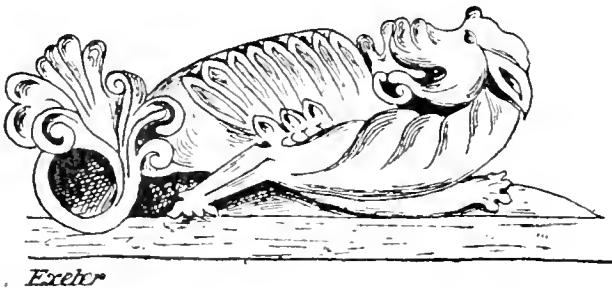
The following list of Perpetual Curates and Vicars of Swymbridge, from 1578, has been compiled by the Rev. J. Frederick Chanter, of Parracombe. It has not been found possible to obtain a list of the earlier names.

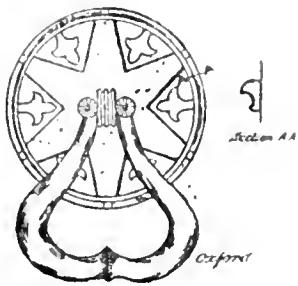
PERPETUAL CURATES.

1578—James Martyn, register, Sir James Martyn and Anne, married 15 Feb., 1578.	1669-1674—Daniel Cory. Mr. Daniel Cory bur. 29th July, 1674.
Richard Can, buried 18 Feb., 1588.	1674—Arthur Willcocks.
1589—John Brook. He had been curate of Iddesleigh 1584 to 1589, and resigned Swymbridge in 1603 for Lynton, where he died and was buried 16 March, 1613-4. The early part of the oldest register book at Swymbridge, viz., from 1563 to 1600, is a parchment copy made by John Brook from paper originals.	1679—Thomas Yeo. Was at Swymbridge certainly to 1687, probably to 1695.
1603 to Feb., 1606—Matthew Hammond.	1695—William Bear.
1606—Edward Dawson.	1736-1779—William Prince. William Prince was the grandson of the Rev. Leonard Prince, of Ilfracombe and Instow, who was uncle of the famous Rev. John Prince, author of the "Worthies of Devon." William Prince, curate of Swymbridge and Landkey, married Elizabeth, dr. of Rev. Christopher Boyce, R. of Sherwell, and was the last male of the Prince family, having had only one child, a daughter Priscilla.
1627 to 1649—William Leigh, sr. William Leigh, clerk, buried 31 May, 1649; will dated 8 Sep., 1648, proved 25 June, 1650 (96 Pembroke).	1778-1787—Charles Hill.
1649 to 1669—William Leigh, jr. William Leigh, Clarke, buried 29 May, 1669	1788-1822—Nicholas Dyer.
	1822-1832—Hugh Northcote.

VICARS.

1832-1880—John Russell.	1887-1899—Jose F. L. Gueritz.
1880-1887—Richard Martin.	1899—H. Harrison.





North Molton.

Parish Church of All Saints.

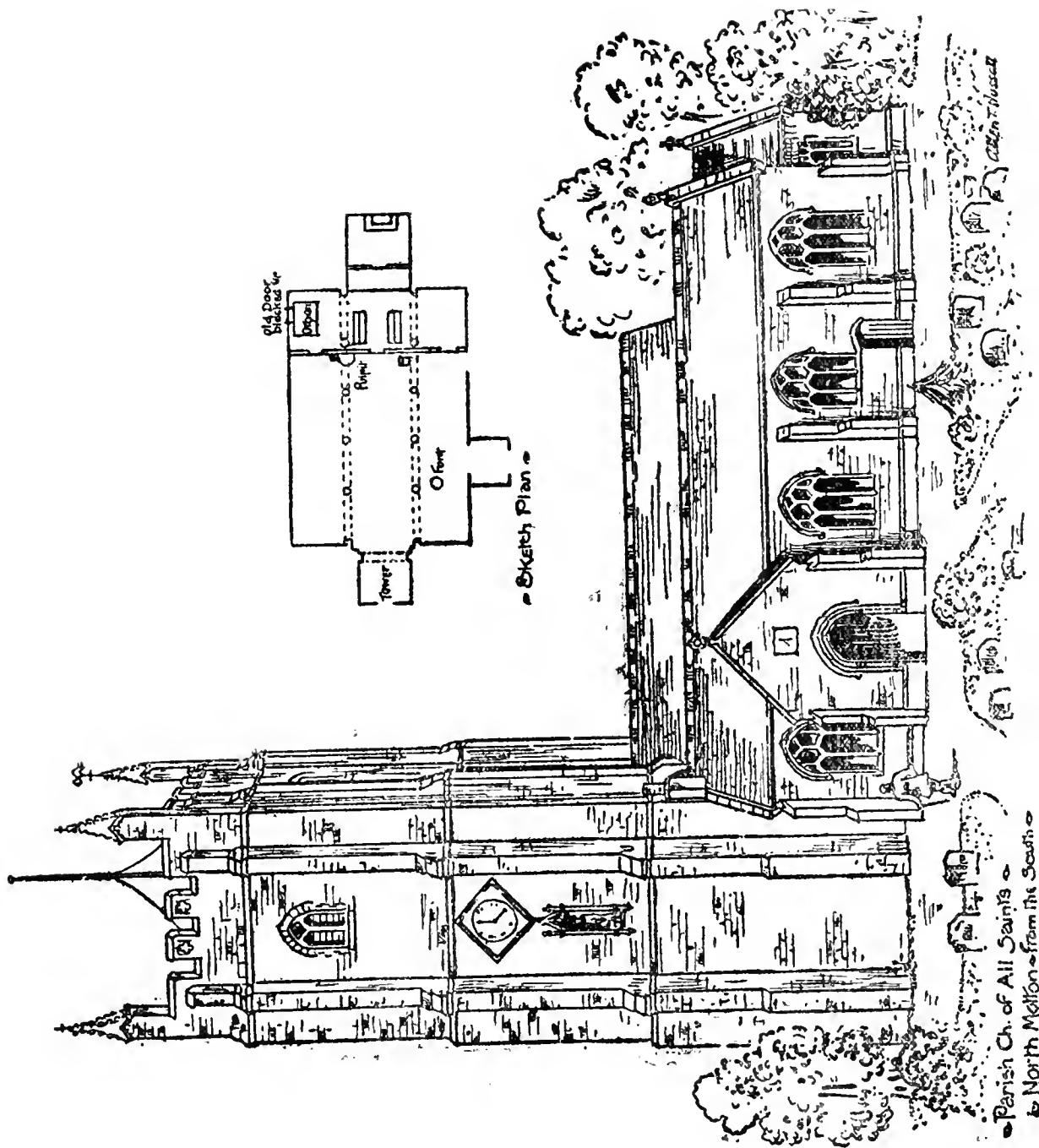


NCE a mining village, producing copper, iron, silver and lead, North Molton is now one of the quietest of Devonshire villages; long and straggling, and built high up on the borders of Exmoor Forest, about three miles from the Somerset boundary, where lies the famous Doone country. Tradition has it that the Romans mined here for iron. The mines were worked in King John's reign, and afterward at various distances of time; but in the latter half of the last century they were abandoned—although some temporary encouragement had been given, in 1850, by the finding of a nugget of stringy gold in digging a sawpit near Heasley Mill, two miles north of the village. As in the case of Combe Martin, the mining industry may have had something to do with the establishment and upkeep of a fine church, such as that at North Molton undoubtedly is.

The church consists of a nave and chancel, with north and south aisles to each, a vestry, south porch and western tower, constituting a very symmetrical plan (see "sketch plan.") The combined length of the nave and chancel is 83 feet 7 inches, and the width across the nave and aisles is 47 feet 2 inches at the west end and 47 feet 6 inches at the east end. It has sittings for 300, and the register dates from 1539 (Henry VIII.)

The most striking feature about the structure is the clerestoried nave, from the fact that the clerestory is not modern—original clerestories not being frequent in North Devon churches. At the same time it cannot be said that the clerestory in North Molton Church was constructed when the church was built, for the design of its windows (fig. 1) is Tudor—about 1500 (Henry VII)—and the church is of Perpendicular date—about 1450 (Henry VI). When first built, the church may have had less windows than now; so it perhaps came about that the nave walls were afterwards raised, and the four clerestory windows inserted on each side to light up the nave and its roof—the old roofing being refixed. This added weight on the nave piers may account for the excessive leaning over of the piers of the north aisle. The nave is of four bays, having moulded piers and arches in Beer stone. Fig. 2 gives details of the piers, which are of very neat design. There is an old doorway in the wall of the north aisle of the chancel, behind the organ, blocked up, which indicates that the aisle may have been originally a chapel, and the door the priest's door. The opposite aisle may also have been a chapel—possibly for the Bampfylde's, whose tomb is there. The vestry is a modern addition, and has an embattled parapet.

The tower is noble and massive, rising to a height of 91 feet 6 inches to the top of the battlements, and the pinnacles rise another 10 feet. It contains a clock and six



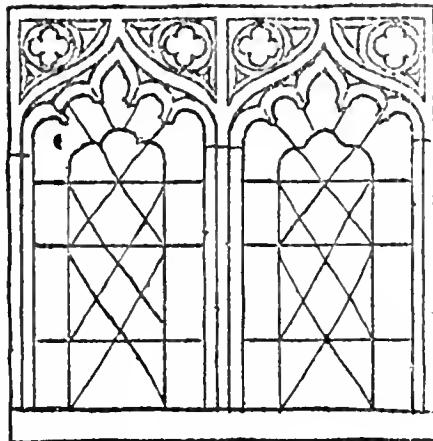


FIG. 1

the stones being as much as five feet long and fifteen inches thick. The stone is a local sandstone, of a very durable nature, and the walling is of the description known as "squared rubble built in courses." The whole church is built with this stone, in the same substantial way—restored in parts; but the north side of the building shows a considerable amount of *unrestored* stone facings, which are still in good condition.

Between 1876-83 the galleries were removed from the west end of the church, and the organ placed where it now stands, in the north aisle of the chancel; and from 1886-90 about £730 was spent in restoring the building.

The roofs are of oak, of the usual "cradle" or "wagon" form throughout. Judging from the carving and mouldings, they are of fifteenth century date, and the original roofs; all (except that in the chancel) having plastered panels, with moulded ribs and carved bosses—the carving being particularly good and done in conventional floral and leaf designs. In the south aisle are two bosses of grotesque character. Fig. 4 shows one of them. The aisles have stone corbels below the wall plates, which would have formerly carried carved angle figures. The wall plates are modern. The underside of the chancel roof is plastered over its entire surface, left quite plain, and finished with a moulded cornice at the junction with the walls. The curved braces of the roof show through the plastering.

The chancel rood screen, as originally completed, must have been a very fine example of pre-Reformation work—about 1450 (Henry VI.) What is left of the old portion clearly shows this. As it now stands, it is of eleven bays and two half bays, and stretches across the full width of the church—viz., 47 feet 6 inches—2 feet longer than the Hartland screen, and 3 feet 6 inches longer than that at Swymbridge. None of the old groining or cornice is left. These parts have been replaced with modern oak panelling, quite plain, and a moulded cornice. The bays are, as usual, in four divisions or lights, the tracery in the two end bays being slightly different to that in the remaining ones. The tracery in the panelling below the bays is of great beauty, in varied designs, and a row of quatre-foils runs along at the bottom, the whole length of the screen. The main mullions are lightly carved with a running pattern of interlacing

bells. The roof is some seven feet or so below the top of the battlements, and was probably at one time much higher. There are four belfry lights, and on the south side of the lowest stage is a canopied niche, with figures of the Virgin and Child. The battlements are ornamented with quatre-foiled panels, and the pinnacles are crocketed and have cusped gables. The buttresses have a very bold projection, and are set back unusually far from the angles of the tower. The ground-storey arch, opening into the nave, is constructed in an uncommon manner, being carried on a sub-arch rising from moulded and carved corbels, and presenting a very striking appearance. This tower possibly cannot be excelled in Devon for strength, as the masonry is very massive, some of

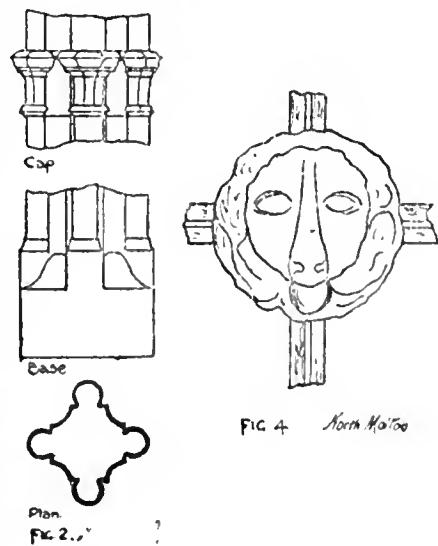


FIG. 4 North Molton

stem and leaf, continued up and over the arches, and under the sill of the bays. At the extreme south end, where one of the half bays comes, the panelling has a curious semi-hexagonal projection to the westward, with a shelf at the top—the front part of which has been hacked away. It would appear that this extra feature in the screen was a support for an image connected with a shrine. The doorway adjacent to it, opening into the churchyard, is of much later date than the screen, and consequently would not have been in the way at this point. (The sill of the window has been pushed up to make head-room for the door.) No trace of the rood-loft stairs remains.

There are also two parclose screens. The north one is of the same period, and very probably of same date, as the chancel screen. It is in three bays of four lights each, and has a carved cornice, consisting of one row of vignette tendril carving, finished at the top with a cable mould, and at the bottom with cresting. The main mullions are carved in the same way as those of the chancel screen, and the tracery in the head of the east bay has a rather better finish than that in the other two bays. The south screen has a series of narrow lights, filled in at the top with tall ogee crocketted arches. The cornice is carved with one row of bold vignette carving at the top, a cresting at the bottom, and a cable mould between. This screen is of later date than the north one, and is built up of parts of old carved

work from church fittings. The design is very effective, and very much resembles the sanctuary screen in Tawstock Church.

The pulpit is evidently of the same date as the chancel screen, and may have been made by the same craftsmen. It is of oak, having seven carved sides, with richly crocketted canopied niches, which formerly contained figures, but these are missing; and in place of them, four of the niches are filled in with pieces of carved tendril work, and the remaining three contain modern carved oak figures. The under portion has the appearance of having been mutilated, and then rather roughly restored with four rows of carving, similar to that in the niches. The base is modern, in stone, and overhead is a splendid six-sided oak sounding-board in the Classic style of Wren's time—probably constructed early in the eighteenth century. The under-side is in plain moulded panels, and the cornice is very richly moulded and dentilled, containing a row of carved consoles, or brackets, of Corinthian design. The sounding-board measures about 6 feet 6 inches across.

The stone font (fig. 5) is a fine example of Late Perpendicular work, about 1480 (Edward IV.) It

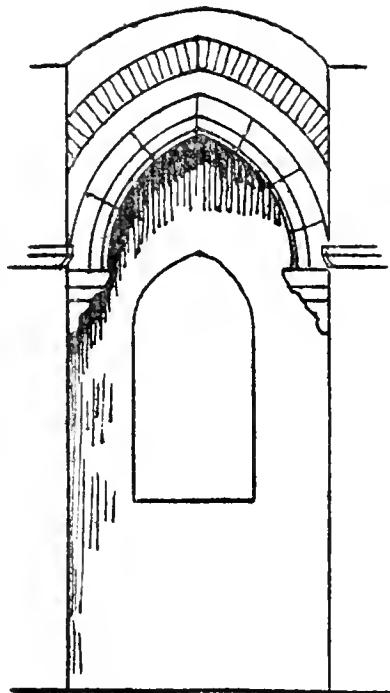


FIG. 3.

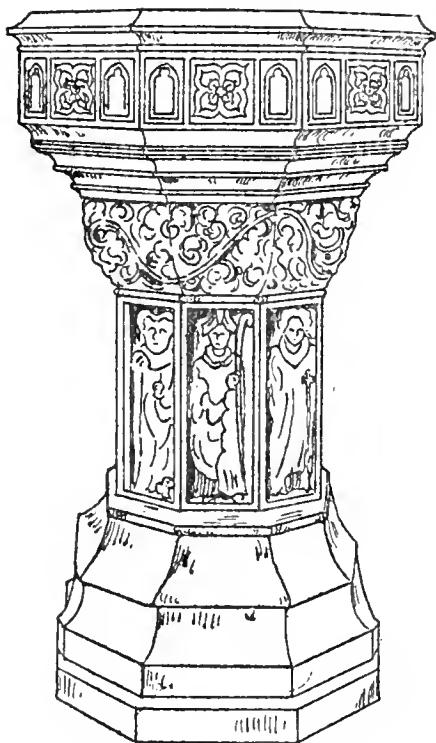
North Molton.

FIG. 5

North Molton.

is octagonal and unusually high, measuring 4 feet 4 inches from floor to top of basin, and 2 feet 5 inches across at the top. The basin has panelled and traceried sides, with mouldings at the top and bottom, diminishing inwards to the coving, which is very boldly carved in conventional foliage. The stem and base are also octagonal, and the former has niches with carved figures of saints. This font is one of the best of its period in Devon, the different portions contrasting admirably with each other, and the workmanship being excellent.

The finest feature within the church is the magnificent Jacobean panelling around the three walls of the sanctuary—one of the best examples of the style in the kingdom. It is in seven bays, 7 feet 3 inches high, projecting about two feet from the walls, and divided by eight pillars. In each bay is a shelf, about four feet from the floor. The pillars have tall pyramidal finials, resting on four balls, and finished at the top with a spiked ball. The whole of the panelling is very richly carved in the style of the period, and on the faces of the pillars and between the panelling above the shelves, are carved pilasters, with Ionic caps, of the form usually found in Jacobean work. A large coat-of-arms is carved in the middle of the eastern portion, just over the altar; and there are also smaller coats-of-arms in the frieze. The date "1609," and the initials "E.P.," are carved on the north and south corners, at the east end. The initials show that the panelling was probably erected in and for the sanctuary by an ancestor of the late Lord Poltimore, the lord of the manor.

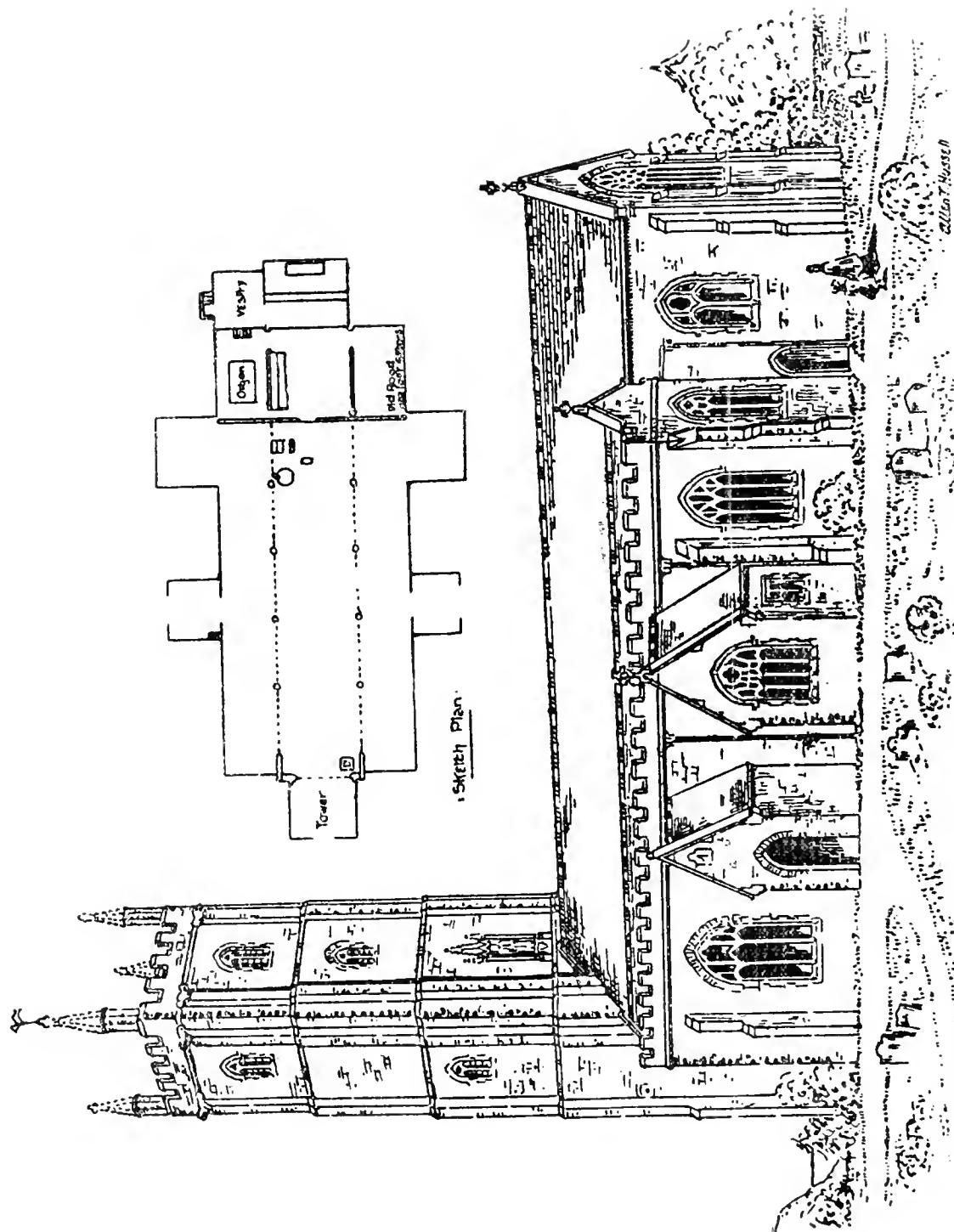
In the south aisle of the chancel is a splendid Renaissance tomb, of alabaster, to Sir Amias Bamfylde, erected in 1626 (Charles I.) by his son John Bamfylde. It contains full-size effigies of Sir Amias and his wife—the former in a recumbent position, and the latter seated, holding a book. The other figures, on a smaller scale, represent their twelve sons and five daughters. Two columns, with carved caps, carry a massive entablature, with "broken" pediment, and a coat-of-arms; and near the tomb is a tablet, with heading in English, and a genealogical inscription in Latin.

There is a very elegant mural monument, on the north wall of the nave, to John Burgess and his wife, formerly of Upcott, in North Molton parish, and who died in 1758 and 1772 (George II.-III.) respectively. The monument is of elongated elliptical form, in marble, with central inscription panel containing a carved cherub, and a moulded margin, wreathed with very delicately carved flowers and leaves.

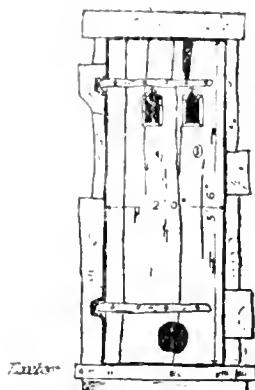
Attached to the chancel screen, at the back of the before described projecting portion at the south end, is a curious little old oak enclosed pew, with door; but it is not known why it was placed here, or for whom it was made. The seating throughout the church is modern.

The church does not possess a list of incumbents.





o: Parish Ch. of St Nechan: a
o: Hartland: Oct 1907: (from the South)



Hartland.

Parish Church of St. Nectan.



ARTLAND Church is not really in Hartland Town, but is a mile and a half distant from there, in the hamlet of Stoke, on the way towards Hartland Quay, which lies another mile west. This north-west corner of Devon, terminating with Hartland Point (the Hercules Promontory of the ancients), is extremely beautiful in land and coast scenery, and teems with romance and wild legends. Along the coast a series of ferny combes stretch inland, and which are described so vividly by Kingsley,* "Each is like the other, and each is like no other English scenery. Each has its upright walls, inlaid of rich oak-wood, nearer the sea of dark-green furze, then of smooth turf, then of weird black cliffs, which range out right and left far into the deep sea, in castles, spires, and wings of jagged iron-stone. Each has its black field of jagged shark's tooth rock, which paves the cove from side to side, streaked with here and there a pink line of shell sand, and laced with white foam from the eternal surge, stretching in parallel lines out to the westward, in strata set upright on edge, or tilted towards each other at strange angles by primeval earthquakes; such is the 'Mouth,'† as those caves are called; and such the jaw of teeth which they display, one rasp of which would grind abroad the timbers of the stoutest ship. To landward, all richness, softness, and peace; to seaward, a waste and howling wilderness of rock and roller, barren to the fisherman, and hopeless to the shipwrecked mariner."

To reach peaceful little Stoke from this coast, one must strike inland for about a mile and a half, due south from Shipload Bay.

Stoke St. Nectan Church—usually known as "Hartland Church"—is sometimes called the "Cathedral of North Devon," and this title may be justified by the air of nobility, solemnity and mystery which the church possesses, and also by the beauty and fine workmanship of much of the old work which it contains. It is a large building, but not so extensive as several of the other North Devon churches, and is dedicated to St. Nectan, a Christian missionary, who, tradition states, was the eldest and most distinguished member of the large saintly family of the Welsh Prince Brechan (from whom Brecknockshire takes its name); and he was probably one of the Irish-Welsh people who were driven out of Wales and settled in Devon and Cornwall. He is supposed to have arrived at Hartland in Prince Arthur of Cornwall's time (about A.D. 500), who, song and tradition say, so bravely fought the Saxons, and who is famed in story with his "Knights of the Round Table." The story goes that "St. Nectan was caught and beheaded by a band of robbers at Newton (about a mile from Stoke), where a church was afterwards erected in his

* In "Westward Ho!"

† Marsland Mouth.

honour. The legend says that St. Nectan took his head in his hands and walked as far as St. Nectan's well at Stoke, and there, after placing his head upon a certain stone, he died. The legend was probably invented to account for the transfer of the site of the church from Newton to Stoke."*

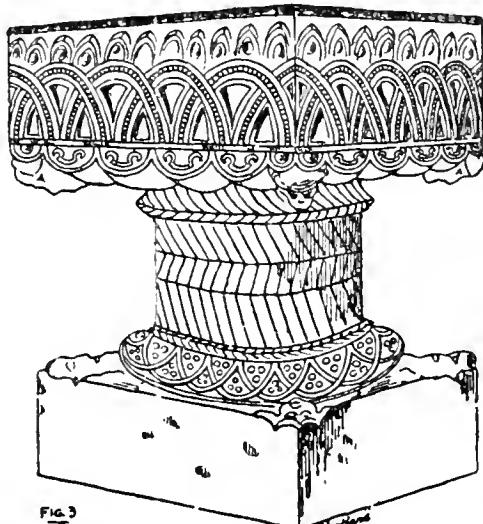
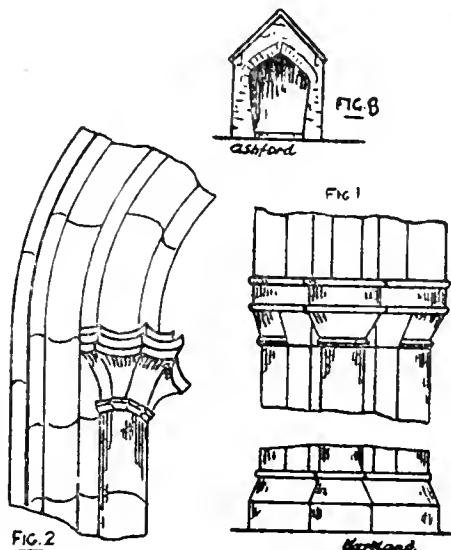
There is a well in a lane near the church which is still pointed out as "St. Nectan's Well."

It is stated that the first church on the present site at Stoke was erected about A.D. 1060 by Gytha, a Dane of royal blood, the mother of King Harold, and an ancestress of our Queen Alexandra.

On plan, Hartland Church is cruciform in shape, and consists of nave and chancel, with north and south aisles to each; north and south transepts and porches, and a western tower. The total interior length, including the tower, is 136 feet 9 inches; and the combined width of the nave and its aisles is 45 feet 6 inches. The registers date from the year 1558 (Elizabeth), and contain a reference in the Commonwealth period to William Morrice, who was afterwards knighted and became Secretary of State to Charles II.

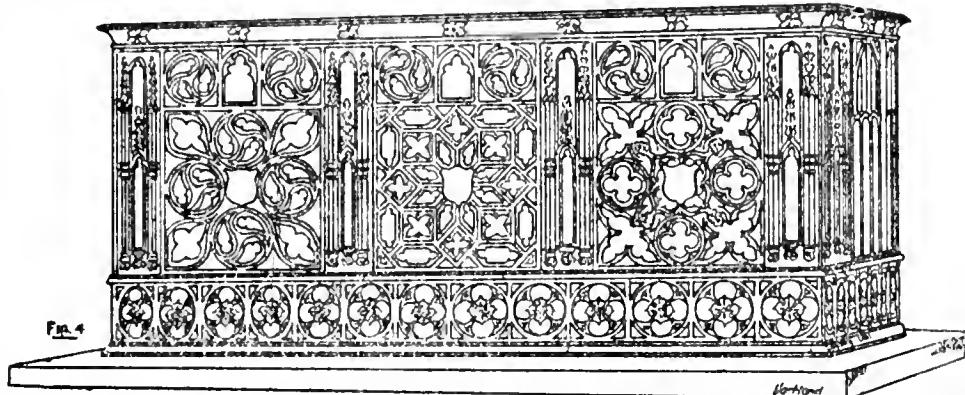
The building has 580 sittings, and was restored in 1848, partly by a voluntary rate extending over a number of years, and partly at the expense of the late Mr. George S. Buck (afterwards Sir George S. Stucley, Bart.), and this restoration included the extending of the chancel eastwards. The church is in the Late Decorated and Perpendicular styles, and the dates of erection can be approximately fixed at A.D. 1350 (Edward III.) for the body of the church, and the tower at 1420 (Henry V.).

A very striking feature in the nave is the large span of the arches, measuring 13 feet 4 inches in the clear of the piers. They are built of a local blue limestone, with plain chamfered rings, the piers being of a light yellow colour freestone, moulded, and with caps as shown in fig. 1. The inclination of the piers from the upright is most perceptible in this church—those of the north aisle leaning over to the north, and those of the south aisle to the south. Only the piers lean—the arches being perfectly upright, and the inclination is practically the same in each pier. As mentioned in a previous article, this peculiarity in the construction of the nave arcading is often met with, especially in churches situated by or near the sea, and was done, as some believe, as a symbol of the Church being the Ark of God. For are not the sloping sides of a ship here depicted? And assuming that the "wagon" roof, up to its ridge, was inverted, together with the nave, then they would become in



shape like the hull of a ship, with the floor of the nave as the deck, and the oak timbering of the roof the ribs of the vessel.

(Ashford Church, near Barnstaple, has a peculiar archway to its south porch (fig. 8)—wider at the springing of the arch than at the bottom of the opening—and in shape like the hull of a ship cut across, and probably built in this way to carry out the above symbol.)

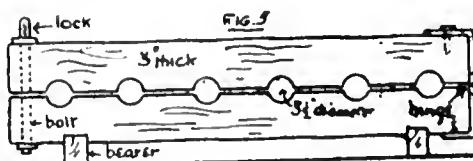


The great west tower is a very noble structure, and, on its elevated site, forms a landmark for miles around, and appears to be exceptionally well built—as is also the whole of the church. It is the highest tower, by several feet, of any ancient parish church in Devon, measuring 128 feet from the base to the foot of the pinnacles—three of which rise another 16 feet, and the remaining one—at the south-east corner—being again higher than the other three.

A large statue of St. Nectan is placed in a canopied niche on the eastern face, and there are large carved grotesque animal gargoyle at each corner, below the parapet, which carry off the roof water. The lofty ground-storey pointed arch, opening into the nave, is 28 feet in height from the floor, very bold in the detail of its mouldings and with unusual shaped caps, the abaci of which are semi-octagonal with segmental sides. (Fig. 2.) The broken outline of these caps, showing out against the plain mouldings of the piers, is very effective. This is by far the grandest tower arch of its period in North Devon, and is formed of what appears to be Beer freestone, differing from the yellow stone used in the earlier nave arcading. In the 18th century a music gallery for the church orchestra stood against the arch, thus blocking it from view. The gallery was removed in the middle of the next century. The tower contains six bells, all recast in 1826, one bell being again recast in 1886, and the whole rehung.

The roofs throughout the church are “wagon” roofs, that of the nave being open-timbered for a length of two bays, having decorated ribs and carved bosses; and from this point, back to the chancel screen, it has a number of square wood panels, with stars painted on each. There are 96 of these star panels, the colours being red stars on a buff background, and yellow on blue, on alternate panels. The roof of the north aisle of the nave is open-timbered for two bays, and beyond that, back to the rood screen, it has a plastered panelled ceiling, both panels and ribs being whitened; the south aisle has a close-boarded panelled ceiling, with carved bosses, for the whole of its length. The chancel roof is open-timbered, with moulded ribs and carved bosses, decorated in colours.

The north aisle of the chancel, known as the chapel or aisle of St. Mary's Guild, has a beautiful wagon-shaped panelled ceiling, the



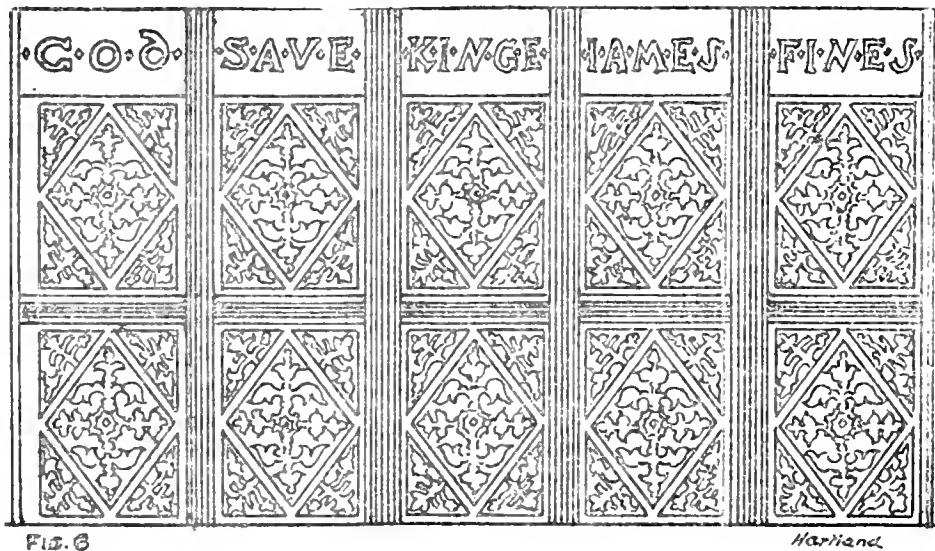
----- 5 ft. -----

panels being formed with moulded main and diagonal ribs, all edged with carved cresting enrichment, and with carved bosses at the junction of the ribs. Portions of the enrichment are missing, but most of it remains, and also some of the colouring and gilding. No doubt this aisle at one time was lavishly decorated and furnished, for it contained an altar, mass being sung up to and during Henry VIII.'s reign, in spite of the Reformation.

The north transept has a plain plastered panelled ceiling, and the south transept boarded panels with carved bosses. The great variety in the treatment of the roofing is very interesting, and the coloured star portion in the nave—rather daring, perhaps, from an architectural point of view—lends brightness to the interior.

Here, in this remote church, is to be found one of the most beautiful of Late Norman fonts, of date probably about 1180 (Henry II.), which in itself is well worth a visit to the church. (Fig. 3.) Placed under the tower arch it is of the most charming design, executed in a warm yellow freestone; the basin—not quite a perfect square—measuring two feet one inch by two feet three inches, standing on a cylindrical stem, and the whole resting on a square base. The basin is lead lined, and has an intersecting series of enriched semi-circles on each of its sides; the under side being scalloped with a raised pattern on the outer termination of each scallop. The stem has diagonal fluting in three rows, ornamented at the bottom in a very chaste manner by a ring, carved in intersecting semi-circles, corresponding with the design on the basin, and surmounted by a mould with zig-zag carving. A touch of humour is shown by the carved masks, or faces of the “baptised,” on the lower corners of the basin, looking down on those of the “unbaptised” on the upper corners of the base.

The altar tomb (fig. 4) was brought from Hartland Abbey and placed in the church when it was restored, taking the place of a communion table. As the sketch shows, it is of very elaborate design, deeply sunk, and showing much ingenuity of arrangement; the three front panels being all different, and the plinth having thirteen quatrefoils on the front and six and a half on each end. The design on the ends represents Late Perpendicular window tracery; thus the date of the tomb can



be fixed at about 1480 (Edward IV.). The material is a dark grey stone, very hard, even, and smooth, closely resembling Purbeck marble. It is not known, with any degree of certainty, whose tomb it was—doubtless someone of high degree in Church or State, judging from its ornateness. An old trefoil-headed piscina remains in the

chancel, which also possesses a good modern sedilia and a credence niche, erected when the church was restored. The pulpit, lectern, reading-desk, and parclose screens also date from that time. The old oak seating in the body of the church is quite plain, and similar to the seating in Clovelly Church. The seats are the original ones, except a few which were re-made at the restoration, and the central aisle between the ends is very wide, measuring six feet six inches. The oak seats with carved ends, now in the south aisle of the chancel, were originally in the north aisle (St. Mary's Guild Chapel), having been erected there about 1530 (Henry VIII.) at the sole charge of Hugh Prust of Thorry, whose initials can be seen on the ends.

The glory of Hartland Church is its superb oak rood screen, fully groined, and extending across the entire width of the church, i.e., the chancel and the aisles—having a total length of 45 feet 7 inches, and a height of 12 feet 6 inches. It is divided into eleven bays, the fenestrations of which are each in four sections, divided by small mullions, which carry a closely reticulated tracery head, above which is the cornice, projecting on both sides, and supported on the groining, which has moulded ribs with bosses at their intersection. The cornice is 46 feet 6 inches long, exquisitely carved on the west side in vignette enrichment, in three rows of undulating vine branch, vine leaves, grapes, and tendrils, repeating; and each row is divided by a cable mould. The vignette enrichment is finished with cresting above and below. The east side of the cornice, facing the chancel, is similarly carved, but in a bolder style. The joists on which the rood-loft rested on the top of the screen still remain, and this loft would have been about four feet three inches wide and three feet high. The door, staircase, and opening in the south wall for access to the rood-loft are still in existence, but the opening in the masonry over the screen, between the arches of the south aisle, is now blocked up.

Hartland screen is one of the earlier and more beautifully executed of the Devonshire screens. It is of the 15th century period and of date about 1450 (Henry VI.), nobly proportioned, and nothing could exceed the brilliance of its marvellous workmanship. It has the additional merit of not having been restored, being, to this day, in a perfect state of preservation. A slight sketch (fig. 7) is given of one bay; but no sketches (or photographs) can do these screens justice, as it is necessary to see them on the spot (with the soft brown colouring of the oak showing out against the grey walls) for their beauty to be properly appreciated. There must have been an earlier screen still than the present one in Hartland Church; and when the latter was fixed, it was partly adapted to the church and the church partly adapted to it; for the arches have been raised, and the blocked up doorway over the screen could not have served for the rood loft (now removed) of the present screen, as it is out of centre, but would have been in correct position for the earlier screen. Regarding the raised arches, it looks as if the workmen, when they were fixing the present screen, found they could not fit it to come evenly right between the pillars, so as to have the doorway referred to in the centre; and so altered, i.e., raised the arches, and brought the screen forward, so that now one can just pass along the top of the screen by bending one's head, instead of, as before, passing through the doorway. The pillars show cuts, which

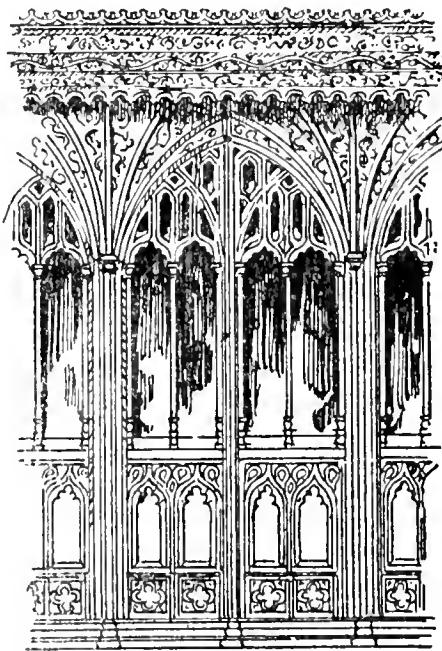


FIG. 7

Hartland

were apparently for the standards of the former screen. It is evident, therefore, that the present screen was very probably brought here from another church and fitted in. The ends are in an unfinished condition.

There are several monuments of interest on the walls. One in the north aisle of the nave is to "John Velly, of Hartland, Gentleman, who faithfully served that glorious prince Charles the Martyr, and his son during the late Civill Wars of England, as a Captain Leivetenant to Svr. Robt. Cary, and having survived these calamitys lived to the enjoyment of peace, prosperity, and a good old age, dying in his 77 year, Dec. 7, 1694." A memorial slab in the south aisle of the chancel is to Anne Abbot, who died Oct. 17th, 1610, and has the following inscription :—

" The Proverb strve tis not unknown to any
That death takes best and leaves the worst by many
Her meritts vertue love and everlasting fame
Will still sprout out though death hath cropt her name
And although meagre death her struck with deadly stinge
For her will all the angels Aleluia singe."

Over the above inscription is the figure of a kneeling woman, engraved on metal and gilded, and also a coat of arms. There is a parvise or room over the north porch, which was occupied in pre-Reformation times by the sacristan or sexton, who lived there and took charge of the church and its treasures. In this room are preserved the old parish stocks (fig. 5). They are 5 feet 6 inches long, and rest on two bearers ; the upper half is hinged to the lower, the three culprits being safely secured by means of a lock at one end. Stocks first came into use about the year 1360 (Edward III.), and they were discontinued about 50 years ago. In the gallery or chamber over the vestry are preserved portions of the oak Jacobean oak pulpit, with the inscription "God Save King James Fines" (fig. 6). The design of the panels is in two rows, divided by vertical and horizontal reeding, one pattern serving for the whole, and consisting of a lozenge-shaped centre, surrounded and filled in with conventional floral and leaf ornaments, the whole giving a rich effect and of unusual design. The inscription was carved in 1625, and was probably not finished until after King James's death, which took place in that year ; hence it is supposed this may explain the concluding word "Fines."

Hartland Church is somewhat of an architectural wonder ; for one naturally asks why such a fine structure should have been built in a part of the country so sparsely populated. Perhaps it may be explained by the fact that the abbots of Hartland Abbey, which was near by, saw to it that a church of considerable size and dignity should be built, and that it should be in close touch with the Abbey. In fact one has heard a tradition to the effect that a subterranean passage or tunnel existed at one time, connecting the Abbey with the church, but that it has long ago been blocked up.

LIST OF INCUMBENTS.

Abbots of Hartland (so far as known).

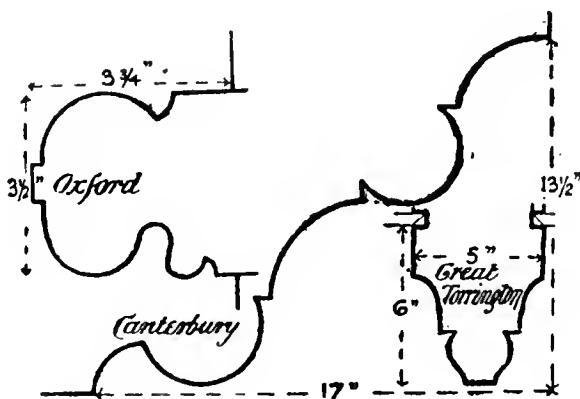
—Benedictus.	1427—Goncianus Mattyngho.
1200 (about)—Hugo.	1442—Richard Tawton.
—John Westcott.	1462—Richard Tawton, jun.
1261—Ogerius de Kernit.	—John Prust (?)
1281—Thomas Wyddebir.	1529—John Prust, jun.
1308—John of Exeter.	—Thomas Pope.
1330—Roger de Ralegh.	
1350—David de Wynscoto.	Dissolution of Abbey, 1539. Great tithes sold to
1355—Wm. Beaumont.	laymen ; maintenance of 15 chapelries in various
1399—Philip Tone.	parts of the parish taken away.

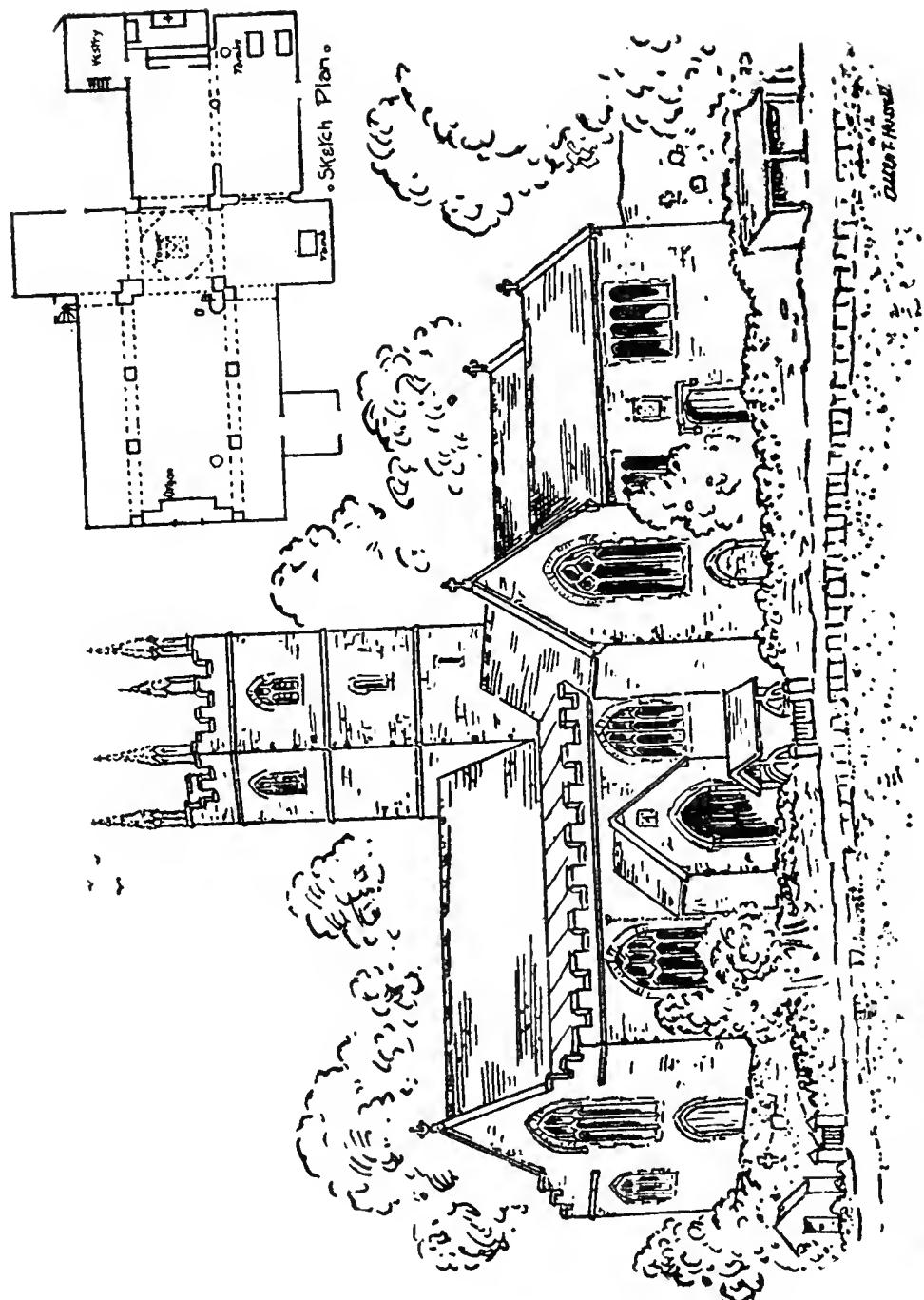
Perpetual Curates.

—John Husband.	—Thomas Orchard.
—John Browne (?)	1721—James Harcourt.
—John Bewford (?)	1728—John Jenkins.
1598—Thos. Dove.	—Henry Prescott.
1627—Wm. Churton.	1737—Wm. Morris.
1645—George Mountjoy (relicensed 1662).	1755—Francis Tutte.
1677—Wm. Orchard.	1763—Rich. Hammett.
1708—Robert Forster.	

Vicars.

1797—Wm. Chanter.	1859—Thos. How Chope.	1907—Edgar Albert Luff.
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• Parish Ch of St Peter
• Tawstock • From the S.W.
• May 1908 • ~



Tawstock.

Parish Church of St. Peter.



HIS fine church stands in a verdant glade near the west bank of the river Taw, two miles south of Barnstaple, on the outskirts of the village of Tawstock, and from where the valley of the Taw may be said to commence; gradually contracting in width, and increasing in beauty, until Eggesford is reached (about fifteen miles south-east by rail)—a lovely spot, in the very heart of Devon, surrounded by wooded hills, with the river flowing past, as it comes away fresh from its source on Dartmoor. Tawstock is a place of very ancient origin, the terminal *stock* being the Saxon *stock* or *stoke*, prevalent in the West and North, and meaning settlement or homestead. It dates back as the residence of the Lords of Barnstaple to the reign of Henry II., and has been held by the Tracey, Martin, Bourchier and Wrey families. Tawstock Court—a modern mansion and the seat of Sir Bourchier R. S. Wrey, bart., the present lord of the manor—is situated overlooking the church, and commands magnificent views of the surrounding country. The ancient residence was burnt down in 1787, the only portion remaining being the gate-way, with tower over, dated 1574, forming an entrance leading to the present mansion.

The church has a plain exterior, although the centrally placed tower gives it a distinguished appearance. The interior gains greatly in effect from the position of the tower, the plan resembling, on a smaller scale, the western part of Crediton Church, with its centre tower. Of all the churches dealt with in this book, Tawstock has struck the writer as being the most romantic—this word seeming best to convey the impression that the actual building makes on the observer; for there is about it an air of unspoilt 14th century beauty, and to all in search of genuine structural work of that period in this part of Devon, with enough of ornament to give it added interest, Tawstock Church is the one to visit.

Embowered in massive trees which shelter it from the north, its plan, on examination, will be found to have been originally cruciform, and now consists of a nave, with north and south aisles, chancel with south aisle and vestry, north and south transepts, south porch and central tower. The interior length is 113 feet, the combined width of nave and aisles 44 feet 6 inches, and across from end to end of transepts 70 feet 6 inches. The register dates from the year 1538 (Henry VIII.), and there are 350 sittings. The interior is well proportioned, the vista looking down the church from either end being very fine indeed; and a striking effect is produced by the well managed arches at the crossing and transepts. It is recorded that a church existed here in Norman times, but no traces of it remain. Thanks chiefly to the well preserved mouldings and carving, the history of the existing structure can be easily read. It was built in the Decorated or 14th century period of Gothic architecture, and is one of the few Devon churches upon which the 15th century

builders did not lay a heavy hand ; therefore the bulk of it is of the former period, and consequently of exceptional interest. The mouldings and carving show that it

was erected about the year 1340 (Edward III.), and consisted of the present nave and its aisles, the chancel, transepts, and tower. In the Perpendicular period — probably about 1480 (Edward IV.) — the nave aisles were raised, *but not widened* ; and it is owing to this fact that the church remains so well proportioned. At this time, the western doorway (now disused and hidden from view inside by the organ) was constructed, and the west window shortened to get height for the doorway, as can be seen by the old window jamb stones in the walling. The vestry is also probably of this date. Over it is a room said to have been a priest's chamber or parvise, and in which can be seen some remains

of old armour and weapons ; also a dilapidated iron arm and stand, to hold a hour glass — formerly attached to a pulpit, like that in Pilton church. Later, in the 16th century (and judging from the debased Tudor style of the windows and carving, of date about 1540) (Henry VIII.) the chancel aisle was built. The detail and workmanship of the roof of the porch indicate that it is of late 17th century date. Structurally, the most interesting thing about the building is the line of demarcation showing in the exterior of the walling of the west end of the nave south aisle, between the 15th century raised portion and the 14th century walling below, and being extremely valuable as evidence to prove that the nave and aisles were originally under one roof only. Usually in old churches such lines of raising do not show, or have been obliterated by works of repair ; but such, fortunately, has not been entirely the case with this church. The line does not show in the corresponding position on the north aisle, but it was doubtless there at one time.

The nave is of three bays, the piers being square and very massive, measuring 3 feet by 3 feet, with a series of shallow Decorated mouldings run on the chamfer plane at each angle, continued up and over the equilateral shaped arches, which have boldly moulded sub-arches — contrasting well with the more delicately cut pier and main arch mouldings (see fig. 1). These latter mouldings finish near the floor on to very neatly designed stops (fig. 2), and the sub-arches of each bay finish on to carved corbels where the main arches spring from the piers. The corbels are fine specimens of the "natural" Decorated type of work, principally carved with human faces and oak leaves (see figs. 3, 4, and 6). Fig 5 is a plain but very effective corbel, each block being chamfered, finished with little trefoil-headed cusps. In common with many



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3

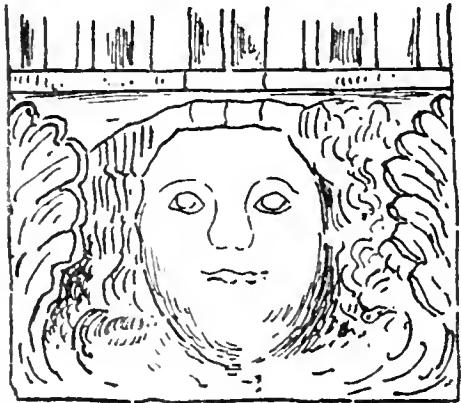


FIG. 4

Tawstock

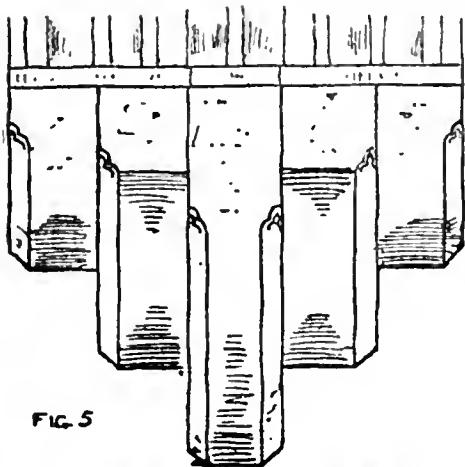


FIG. 5

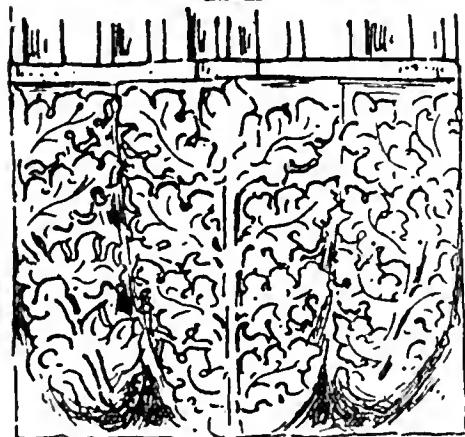


FIG. 6

of the Devon churches containing Decorated work, the stone dressings and carving in this church are of the yellow oolite stone from Hamhill, Somerset, some being of the coarse, and others of the fine grained variety; and also the winding stairs of the tower are of this stone, showing that no expense was spared in obtaining what was considered a suitable material. The warm, rich effect produced by its use is admirable in the interior of this fortunate church; and it is evident that the 14th century builders valued colour in their stone dressings more than evenness of texture, the contrast between the Hamhill and the comparatively cold-looking Beer and Bath stone, used in the 15th century and later work, being very marked.

The moulding of the nave piers is repeated on the tower and transept piers and arches. The south transept was at one time a chapel, as there is an old Decorated piscina in its east wall (see fig. 7), and it also had a separate entrance (now built up) in the south wall—probably a somewhat ornamental shallow porch, part of which, consisting of the archway with its label mould, still stands. (See the exterior sketch of the church.)

Both of the transepts have end windows of the Decorated period, with flowing tracery of

the same design as the north transept window of the same period in Westdown Church. The chancel aisle is in two bays, the arches being depressed four-centred, and the piers and arches moulded. The piers have coarsely carved narrow caps or bands, of conventional foliage design. The two large four-light straight-headed south windows are of very debased Tudor style, but give contrast. The south doorway in the aisle has a large coat-of-arms over it, on the outside, carved in stone.

The tower is 76 feet 7 inches in height from the ground to the top of the battlements, and 86 feet to the top of the pinnacles, and contains six fine toned bells, dating from 1753 to 1794 (George II.-III.) Below the battlements it is very plain in appearance, and in the 15th century it was possibly altered somewhat, e.g., the belfry lights filled in with Perpendicular tracery, new string-courses built, and perhaps the battlements and pinnacles rebuilt. Access to the tower is obtained in a roundabout way by a winding stone staircase, starting from the north-west corner of the north transept, and

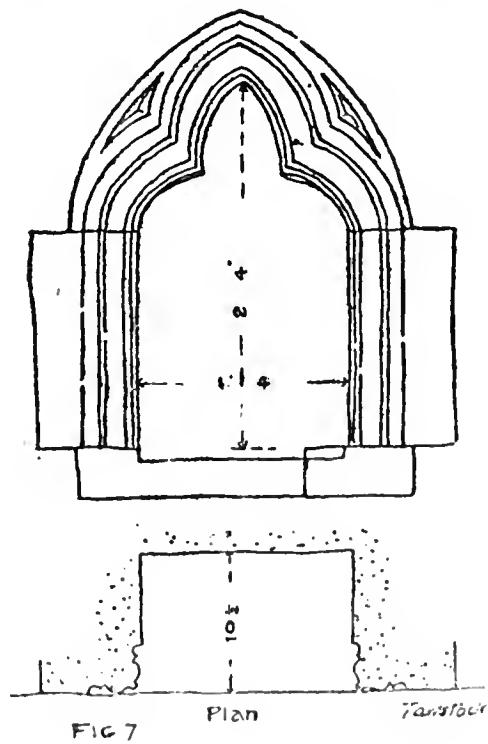
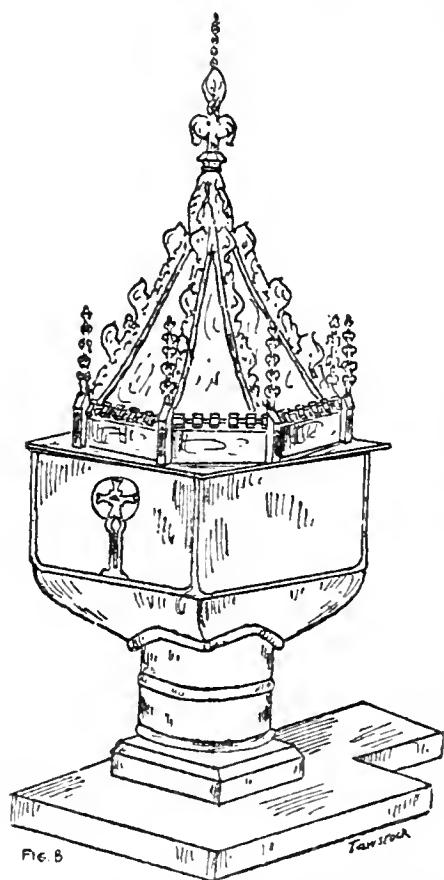


FIG. 7

leading up to a gallery (fig. 9), which crosses the west wall of the transept, from which a step-ladder rises to the ringer's stage. From there, the steps ascend in the north-west corner of the tower, to the roof. The oak gallery—16 feet long and 3 feet 9 inches high—shown in the sketch was fixed about 30 years ago, and is a good specimen of Late 16th century work, but there appears to be no record as to what building it was obtained from, or for what purpose it was used. It has been suggested that it was a rood-loft over a screen, but it is hardly elaborate enough for that. It may have been a minstrel or other gallery in another part of the church, or may have come from an old manor-house. The sill is carved with a running floral design, and the rail is ornamented with carved pateræ in two rows. Before the gallery was fixed here, the ringers crossed to the tower by a gallery or bridge on the opposite side of the wall (the east end of the nave north aisle), and the old door

which led to it still remains in the north wall of the aisle. The tower is groined in stone beneath the ringer's stage, forming an unequal octagon, the central part of which is again groined, but in oak, rather elaborately, with lierne ribs, the effect looking up from the floor of the church being excellent. The object of this groining was apparently partly constructional, viz., to give extra support to the floor of the ringer's stage, and partly ornamental.

The roofs are of oak, and are fine specimens of their period. In the 15th century the church was probably re-roofed, and some of the existing roofs are of that period. Those of the nave and chancel are of open-timbered "cradle" variety ; the nave aisles having flat panelled roofs, the ribs being heavily moulded and ornamented with richly carved bosses, and the panels boarded. As the aisles are only 9 feet wide, this form of roof was a necessity, because cradle roofs would have been unsuitable with such narrow aisles. Over each pier, in both aisles, are 14th century carved stone heads, forming corbels, which supported the tie beams or struts of the Decorated roof trusses in the aisles, before they were raised ; and the line of the abutment of these trusses on to the nave arcading can be very plainly seen in the plaster. The chancel aisle has a fine 16th century open-timbered cradle roof, with ribs forming open



panels, and ornamented with carved bosses. The ribs are also carved, which gives a rich appearance to this roof. The cradle roofs of the transepts are plastered on the underside, left white, and ornamented with beautiful modelled plaster flowers, arranged in the form of a cross, in the central part of the ceiling, of English Renaissance style—probably Early 18th century work. The roof of the porch is panelled, with moulded main and diagonal ribs, carved bosses and carved wall plates. This roof (except the wall plates, which are of 16th century date) is possibly of Late 17th century date.

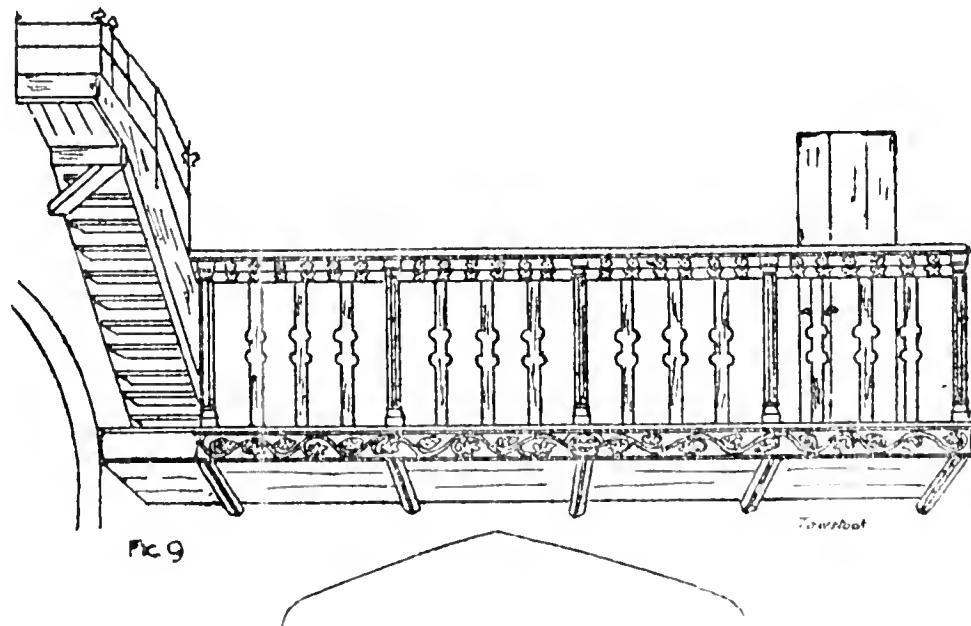
There are two old oak screens, probably of Early 16th century date—one between the crossing and the chancel, and the other between the south transept and the chancel aisle. The former one closely resembles the south parclose screen in North Molton Church, consisting of a series of tall and narrow lights, which are filled in at the top with ogee-shaped crocketted arches, interlaced with tracery. The

cornice is moulded and surmounted with high cresting, and the panelling in the lower portion is quite plain. The screen is of light construction, and cannot have been a rood screen, for it was evidently never meant to carry a rood-loft. It may be one of the "secondary" screens which were placed in the larger churches to mark off the limits of the choir and sanctuary. The chancel aisle screen has the head and shoulders of two figures—possibly of its donors—carved in the upper part of the tracery of the doors, and the middle member of the cornice is in carved floral Jacobean work—quite foreign to the screen itself, and evidently planted in to repair it at this part. In the crossing are four old oak benches of 16th century work, with well carved outer ends—the Italian Renaissance style being very marked; and on the opposite side of the crossing are four modern oak benches, in the outer ends of which are inserted carved Jacobean panels.

A remarkable looking old oak private pew is to be found in the north transept, of Italian Renaissance style, and about the same date as the old benches before mentioned. It measures 4 feet 4 inches by 4 feet 7 inches, and is 8 feet 3 inches high; has plain panelled sides and back, a carved segmental panelled and carved ceiling, richly decorated and supported in front with two carved Ionic pillars, the cornice and other portions also being carved.

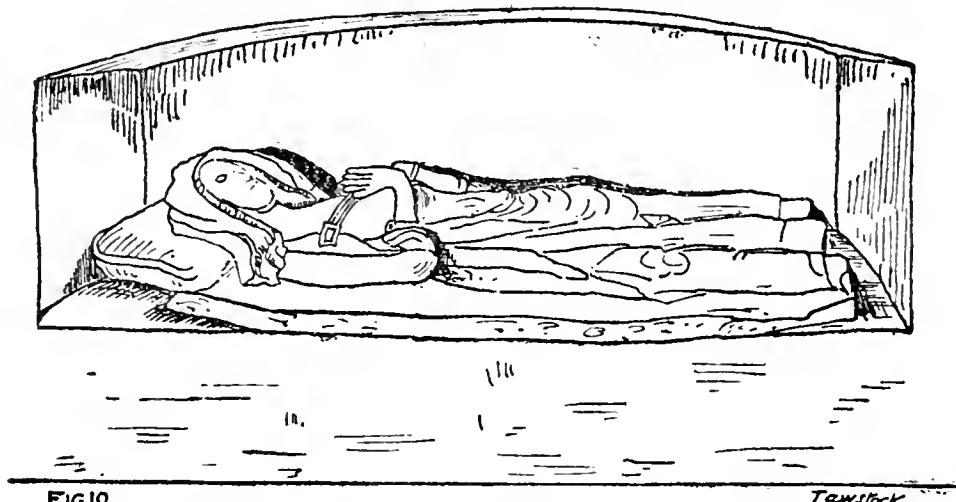
The font (fig. 8) is square, of plain Norman design, on a cylindrical stem, and has an old oak octagonal cover, with carved ribs and crockets. The detail and workmanship of the cover points to its being of 17th century work, and the font may be contemporary with it, as there are no indications that it is an original Norman one.

In an arched recess in the north wall of the chancel is an old oaken recumbent effigy of a lady of the 14th century, dressed in a wimple and mantle. It is 4 feet 5 inches in length, and in a very good state of preservation. The effigy may have surmounted an altar-tomb at one time, and they are rather rare. (There is one in Westdown Church, to Sir John Stowforde, also of 14th century date.) On the north side of the chancel, within the altar rails, is a magnificent altar tomb, bearing the recumbent effigies of William (Bourchier) 5th Baron Fitzwarine and 3rd Earl of Bath, who died in 1623 (James I.), and the Lady Elizabeth (Russell), his first wife;



and on the tomb are also three smaller kneeling effigies. It is entirely covered with coloured and gilded decoration. In the chancel aisle are two very handsome tombs,

one of them being to Frances, wife of John (Bourchier) Lord Fitzwarine, who died in 1586 (Elizabeth), and the other to Henry, 5th and last Earl of Bath, died 1634 (Charles I.). This latter is a sarcophagus tomb, of uncommon and massive design,



consisting of carved white marble sides and ends, and on the top four splendidly carved griffins support a large block of polished black marble, and placed on this is a coronet. At each corner of the lower part of the tomb are tall black marble pinnacles, each resting on four balls. Close to this tomb is a standing figure of white marble on a stone pedestal, to Lady Rachel, the wife of the above named Henry, Earl of Bath. She died in 1680 (Charles II.).

There are also several fine old mural monuments in the church. The reredos is modern, of handsome design, in stone, with a carved representation of the Lord's Supper. It was presented to the church by the late Sir Henry B. T. Wrey, in 1888, who also gave the oak seats in the chancel, and the glass in the south transept window. The organ was built in 1902, and stands at the west end of the nave, occupying the entire width, and has a fine oak case. The former organ stood in a gallery in the north transept.

The altar frontal cloth is a very beautiful piece of needlework, and contains figures of three angels. In a glass case in the north transept is displayed a copy of the book, "A Defence of the Apologie of the Church of England," by John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury, published in 1609 (James I.), by John Norton, "Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty." A chain is attached to the book.

The most peculiar feature about Tawstock Church is that the floor *descends* instead of ascends to the chancel, there being altogether seven steps down. The sloping ground on which the church is built no doubt accounts for this, as it falls from west to east. A little bit of scarlet glass, showing high up in the apex of the chancel gable, gives quite a piquant and charming effect.

LIST OF RECTORS.

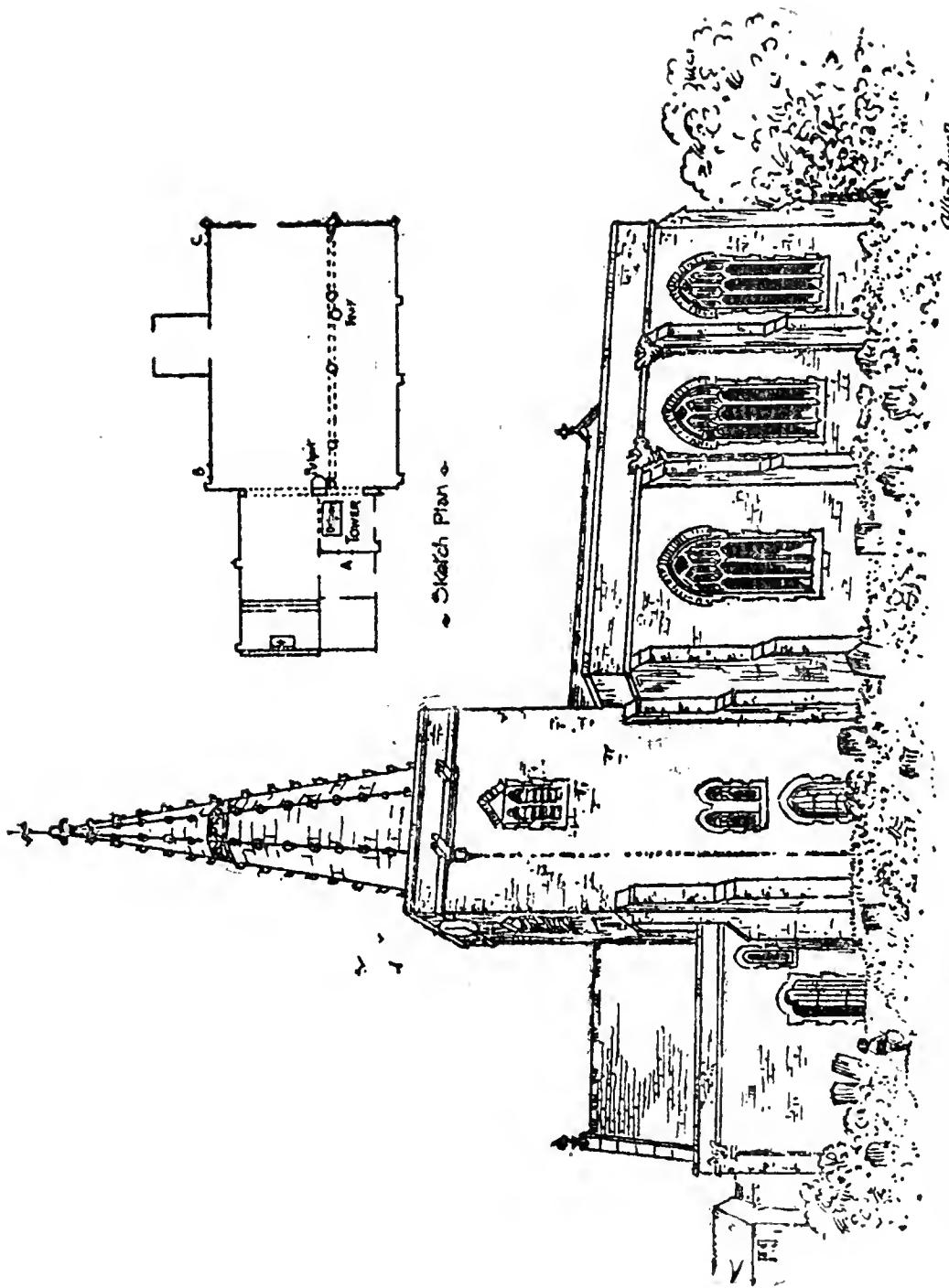
1273—Robert Burnel.	1404—William de Pilton.
1275—John de Pointes.	1435—John Pulton.
(No date)—Robert de Stapledon.	(No date)—Thomas Ludlow.
1311—Edward de Sancto Johanne.	1460—Sampson Combe.
1313—Thomas de Bradford.	1460—John Bourchier.
1313—John de Galmeton.	1468—John Bryte.
1328—Thomas de Hegham.	1469—John Uffculme.
1366—William Woolaston.	(No date)—Oliver Dinham.
1384—William Parkere.	1500—Thomas Bourchier.
1390—Walter Gybbes.	1503—William Horsey.

1543—George Wyndam.
 1543—William Hodge.
 (No date)—Richard Wendon.
 1577—William Wyot.
 1578—Simon Canham.
 1622—Oliver Naylor.
 1636—Richard Downe.
 (No date)—Oliver Naylor.

1705—George Bull.
 (No date)—William Mervin.
 1710—Chichester Wrey.
 1756—Charles Hill.
 1801—Bourchier William Wrey.
 1840—Henry Bourchier Wrey.
 1883—Charles John Down.
 1893—Albany Bourchier Sherard Wrey.

The first name in the foregoing list is still a familiar one in Devon, and so are some of the others.







Bishop's Tawton.

Parish Church of St. John The Baptist.

BISHOP'S TAWTON is a village pleasantly situated on the east bank of the river Taw, two miles south-east of Barnstaple. It is one of the most ancient parishes in Devon. The Manor of Bishop's Tawton, together with Landkey and Swymbridge, formed part of the original endowment of the See or Bishopric of Crediton, which was established in 909, and lasted until 1050, when the See was removed to Exeter by Bishop Leofric. In 1225, Bishop Brewer, the then Bishop of Exeter, endowed the Deanery of Exeter with the church of Tawton, and its chapels of Landkey and Swymbridge.

The existing church at Bishop's Tawton dates from the Decorated or 14th century period; and judging by the similarity of the detail of this period to that contained in the 14th century church of Tawstock, immediately on the opposite side of the river, the two churches were probably in course of erection at about the same time—Tawstock being given a tower only, and Bishop's Tawton a tower, with a spire in addition, as a contrast. The church consists of a nave with north aisle; chancel with clergy and choir vestries; a south porch, and a north steeple. The interior length is 87 feet 4 inches, and the width across nave and aisle 38 feet 6 inches.

The north aisle was restored in 1849, and a general restoration of the remainder of the church took place in 1866. It has 350 sittings, and the registers date from 1558 (Elizabeth). The oldest parts are the nave, tower and spire, and the chancel arch—all of the Decorated period, about 1340 (Edward III.), and next in order of age is the north aisle. The chancel has the appearance of having been rebuilt within modern times, and the vestries and porch are also modern.

The steeple is the most interesting feature. The tower portion is of two stages, quite plain in design, and the parapet being without battlements. It contains a clock and six bells, dating from 1803 to 1852. The bells are of fine tone, and have recently been hung in an iron frame. The ground storey has an east

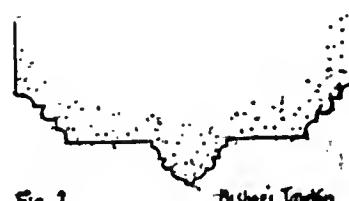


FIG. 1

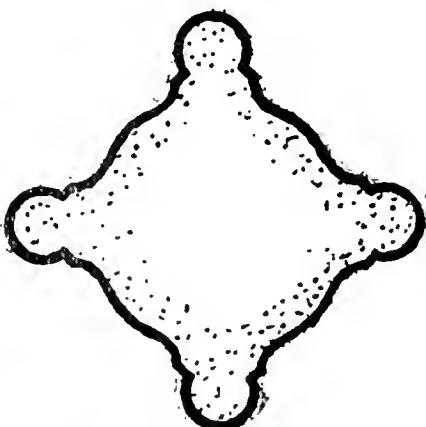


FIG. 4

window (see plan at A), which now looks into the choir vestry. The tower contrasts well with the richly ornamented stone spire. The latter is octagonal, and the squinch arches which carry it at the angles of the square tower are cleverly constructed in the local rubble stone, rising from solid freestone springers. At each angle of the spire running up the whole of its height, are large crockets, terminating with a bold finial (restored), which carries the weather-cock. A very singular thing about this spire is that the crockets spring directly out from the solid masonry, and not from the usual cylindrical ribs, a good effect being thus produced, as they stand out more distinctly. At about half-way up there is a traceried band, which forms a very charming relief. The spire and the parapet of the tower contain a considerable amount of the original Hamhill stone, the colour effect of which is very pleasing. These ancient stone spires are quite rare in Devon. The height from ground to top of spire is about 70 feet, and the outside measurement of the tower on each face is 17 feet 3 inches.



FIG. 2

BISHOP TAWTON



FIG. 3

The 14th century chancel arch is interesting, the detail being nearly the same as the arches of the nave arcades of Tawstock Church. Fig 1 is a section showing the mouldings of the main and sub-arch, and figs. 2 and 3 show the carved stone corbels of the sub-arch.

The north aisle is of Perpendicular date, about 1450 (Henry VI.), the arcading being in three and a half bays, with moulded piers (fig. 4) and arches, each pier having good specimens of the conventional carved caps in interlacing foliage. The half bay, complete, appears to be a modern restoration. When the aisle was restored in 1849 some frescoes in good preservation, and covering the whole of the north wall, were brought to light, but they were evidently destroyed at the time, as there is no trace of them now.

In the south wall of the nave, at B (see plan), is a small doorway, walled up. There is just a possibility that it communicated with a rood-loft. Also at C there is a trace of a narrow window, walled up. The line of the former porch at its junction with the south wall can be seen above and around the existing one, and shows that it was much larger, and high enough to have contained a parvise or priest's chamber over.

The nave roof is an old oak cradle roof, with plastered panels, moulded ribs and carved bosses, and plain moulded wall plates. The greater portion of the roof of the north aisle appears to be modern. It is a flat panelled roof of very massive construction, heavily moulded and ornamented with large carved bosses in the 15th century style. The chancel and porch roofs are open-timbered modern roofs.

The ground storey of the tower is arched on its south and west sides, the organ filling up the former arch, and beneath the latter is an oak screen, very much restored, but exceptionally handsome in its way. The old work contained in it would date from about 1550 (Edward VI.)—the Tudor rose

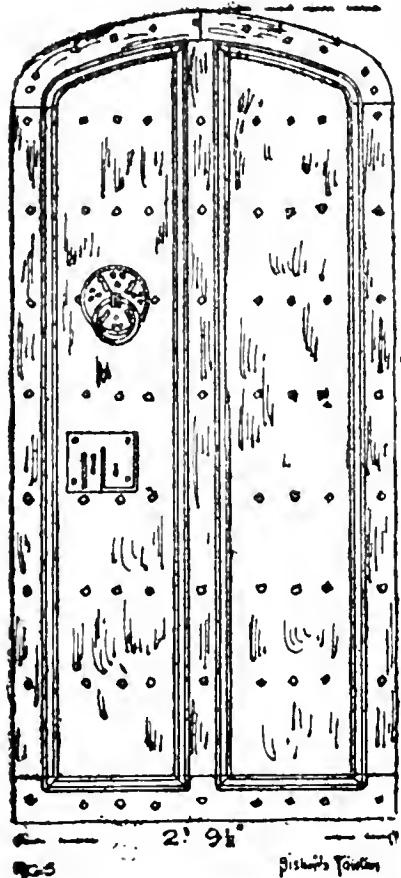
being freely introduced. It is in three bays of four lights each, closely reticulated, surmounted with a carved cornice, and panelled below with cinque-foiled tracery—the cusps meeting centrally in large Tudor roses. The screen is remarkably well proportioned, and the carving (most of which is the original work) of very refined character.

Portions of it retain the old gilding. The design cannot, unfortunately, now be seen to perfection, as the traceried bays are boarded at the back to cut off the ringer's space from the rest of the church. This space may have been a private chapel, with another screen under the south arch. A curious little squint is formed in the wall to the east of the organ front—perhaps done to give a better view of the alter from the chapel, and over the squint are the remains of an old Perpendicular impost moulding, with carved paterae. The west arch is filled in above the screen with modern stone tracery of Perpendicular design, glazed with green glass. The two arches, judging by what is left of the old work, were opened out at the same time as the north aisle was built. At the east end of the aisle, next to the tower arch, is a length of 15th century stone cornice, moulded and carved in leaf design. It is possible that a side altar stood here, and that the cornice formed the top of a reredos—especially as it projects sufficiently to allow for this.

The door to the clergy vestry (fig. 5) is a fine old oak door of Tudor date, about 1530 (Henry VIII.), with moulded framing and seven rows of wrought iron bolts or nails, remains of the old lock plate and also the complete sanctuary ring and plate, which show that it was originally an exterior door in another part of the church, and placed here when the vestry was built.

The font is of stone, octagonal, plainly moulded, and probably of 18th century date, repaired and fitted with a modern oak crocketted cover. There are two huge stone gargoyle figures below the parapet of the north aisle, in the form of grotesquely carved crouching animal figures with wigs. They appear to have been restored—probably when the north aisle was restored. The church possesses some fine old mural monuments—one, in particular, being a noble specimen of 17th century Renaissance work, to Francis Chichester, who died in 1698, aged 69. A small tablet, very prettily executed in alabaster and glass mosaic, is to Lieut. Lionel Chichester, of the 11th (Yorkshire Dragoon) Squadron 3rd Regt. Imperial Yeomanry, who was killed in the late Boer War while defending a kopje at Middlepost Farm, Calvinia, Cape Colony, on the morning of the 6th February, 1902, at the age of 29.

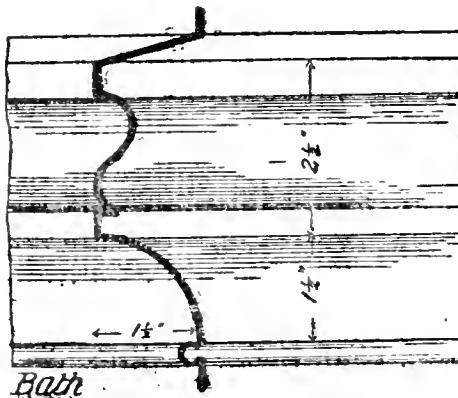
There are ten stained memorial windows to members of the Chichester, Baker, Marshall, and Law families. The west window is to the Rev. John Durant Baker, who died in 1866, having been vicar of Bishop's Tawton for 28 years.



The following is a list of vicars from the year 1285:—

VICARS.

1285—John de Okehampton.	1651—John Pugsley.
1318—Philip de Essewater.	1662—Fermor Pepys.
1348—Radaulphus Wille.	1671—Walter Brace.
1352—William Brown.	1686—Benjamin Barnett.
1355—John Hytche.	1695—James Richardson.
—John Marke.	1724—George Bradford.
1411—John Frost.	1731—Leonard Howard.
1460—William Bowdon.	1748—John Wrey.
1489—Thomas Symons.	1769—Evan Rice.
1518—Thomas Sothorne.	1782—Thomas Moore.
1520—William Symons.	1802—John Lane Yeomans.
1567—Philip Draper.	1826—Whittington Landon (Dean of Exeter).
1576—Thomas Atwell.	1827—James Landon.
1587—Ralph Taylour.	1837—George Landon.
1598—Bryan Bywater.	1837—John Durant Baker.
1607—William Hartewell.	1866—J. Mason Cox.
1618—Walter Cowling.	1870—H. F. Baker.
1631—Bartholomew Shapley.	1890—Morris Fuller.
1643—Thomas Macey.	1893—G. C. Bellewes.
1644—John Wyott.	1896—P. N. Leakey.
—Jonathan Hanmer.	1904—E. A. Lester.



APPENDIX.

Since the studies went to press, I have obtained the following additional particulars, which may be found of interest:—

BARNSTAPLE.

The church possesses some rare books, formerly a parochial library, founded by Judge Dodderidge in 1665, and now kept in an old room over the vestry.

ILFRACOMBE.

Hood-mould Stops. The hood-mould of the north aisle window, immediately east of the tower, stops down on ancient carved heads, probably representing Henry V. and his wife, as the aisle is of date *circa* 1420. The stops are in a good state of preservation, partly accounted for, no doubt, by their being on the north or less exposed side.

Tombstone. Outside the church, on the south side, beneath a fuschia bush, midway between the porch and vestry, is an ancient stone slab, having the proportions of a stone coffin cover, and measuring 6 feet 6 inches in length, 2 feet wide at the top and 1 foot 6 inches wide at the bottom. The thickness is 4 inches, with a splayed or sloping edge all round. The slab is made up of two stones, nearly equal in length, and connected by a cemented joint. A drawing of it was made in 1845 by the late Rev. C. C. Crump, which showed the incised cross and inscription as it then was. The beat of the weather has now left very little trace of the cross which was incised on the top, as the stone has decayed; but some of the inscription running around the edge is still legible, as the grass covers and protects it. The complete inscription on the slab was similar (except that there was no "SYRE") to the Norman-French one on the Tracey tomb in Mortehoe Church, and ran as follows:—

HENRI DANIEL GIT ICI
DEU DEL ALME EYT MERCI

the translation of which would be,

Henry Daniel lies here
May God have mercy on his soul.

Mr. Crump's valuable drawing is unfortunately now missing. No one knows what has become of it, and I have made careful inquiries in various directions, and have also searched through the old church chest, but without bringing it to light. The Rev. F. Nesbitt, who saw the drawing in 1901, during his curacy at Ilfracombe, has kindly sent me a sketch of it as far as he can recollect it, and which shows a simple cross extending nearly the full length of the slab, each extremity terminated with a trefoil, and the head being ornamented with a ring where the arms cross. The design of the cross (the key to the age of the slab) is Early English, of date *circa* 1230.

The slab was removed from the interior of the church during last century, which was a great pity, as a work of such antiquity should have been better cared for. Surely it would be worth while, even now, to replace it within the church, in a good light against one of the walls. Careful cleaning should restore the inscription, and might also recover some part of the cross.

APPENDIX—(Continued).

Mr. Nesbitt tells me that "Mr. Crump was rector of Halford, in Warwickshire. He came to Ilfracombe to live, and in 1850 published a poem on 'The Morte Stone,' which was largely instrumental in causing the lighthouse to be erected on Bull Point." Some Ilfracombe readers may remember him.

BRAUNTON.

Benches. A further examination of the benches, made in a better light, shows them to be of oak, the cross rays being visible, but small and indistinct.

The explanation of the somewhat coarse appearance of some of the oak may be that it is of a tough and hard variety—unlike chestnut which is easier worked.

Window Head. The inner portion of the head, or lintol, of the little slanting west window in the ground storey of the tower, consists of a slab of yellow freestone, carved with a spiral foliage pattern, in Transitional Norman style. The sides of the stone are not parallel, but converge—the shape resembling part of the top of a coffin-shaped tomb. May this stone have come from a Norman church which may have formerly been on the site?

St. Michael's Chapel. Mr. Symonds, of Braunton, the owner of the ruins, holds the opinion that the holes in the walls may have been provided for shooting through. This idea seems feasible; for, subsequent to its use as a chapel, the building may have been used (perhaps during the Civil Wars) for defensive purposes, its position for such being good. The holes, too, are not roughly finished, but formed up square and clear of projections—such as would offer no impediment to accurate shooting.

CLOVELLY.

Within the church are 15th, 16th, and 17th century brasses, to members of the Cary family.

COMBE MARTIN.

The Bishop's Chair in the sanctuary is a fine piece of workmanship. The carving on the back is of a very beautiful conventional Gothic design, somewhat freely treated, and consisting of an upright sheaf of corn, interlaced with a vine branch, bearing leaves and five bunches of grapes. The seat, arms, and framing are carved with scroll and strap work, the scrolls at the top of the back being surmounted by a semi-circular moulded pediment. The mixture of Late Gothic and Early Renaissance detail, shows that the chair is probably of the Elizabethan period, *circa* 1570. This beautiful piece of furniture belonged to a relative of the vicar, living at Tamworth Castle, Staffs. When it came into the vicar's possession, he presented it to the church.

CREDITON.

The old chest, described on page 76, was for some years in the old Manor House of Trobridge, the home of the Yardes, in the parish of Crediton.

BERRYNARBOR.

The lych-gate is of 17th century date.

HARTLAND.

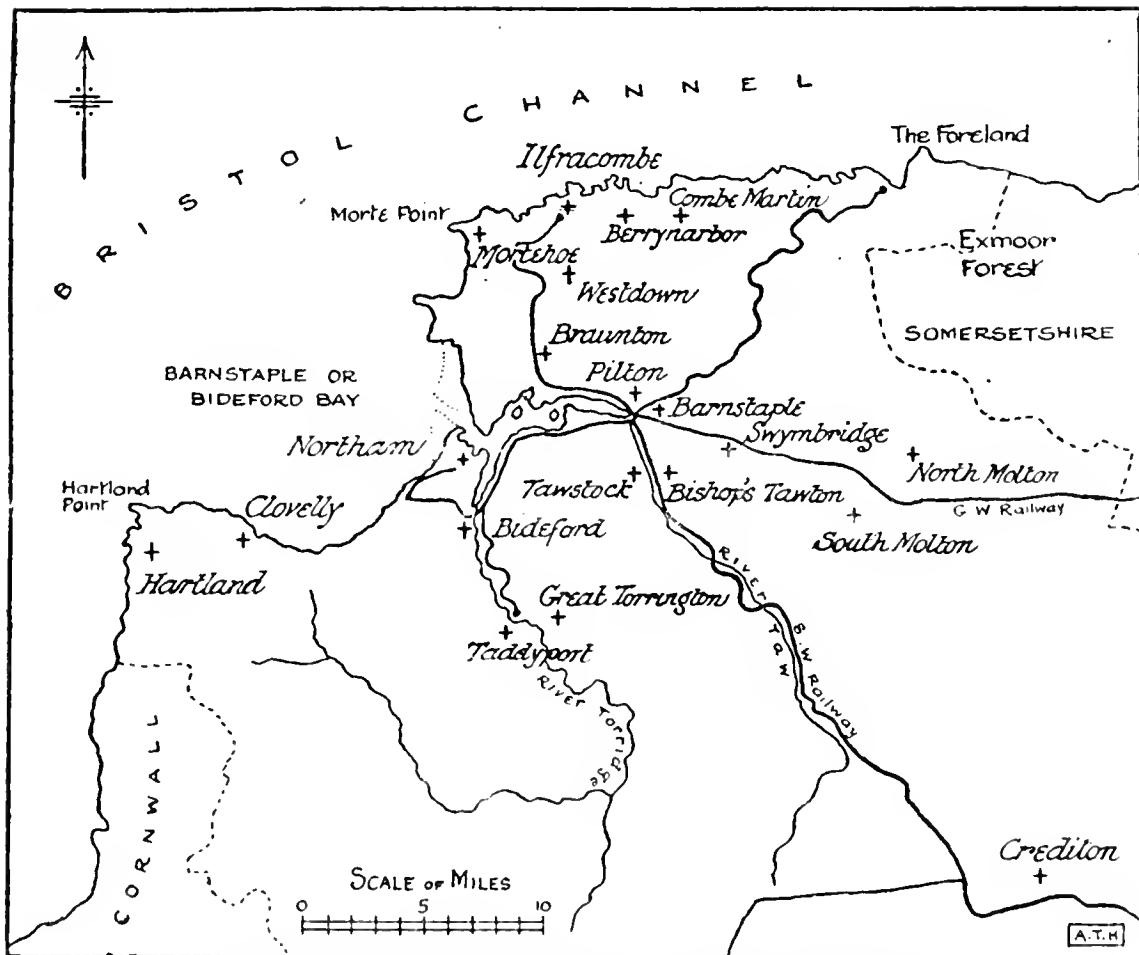
Sanctuary Ring. On the door leading from the chancel to the vestry, is an old sanctuary ring or knocker, which must have been at one time on an outer door.

Sanctus Bell-rope Hole (?) There is a round hole in the masonry, about 3 inches in diameter, running straight up over the stairs that led to the rood loft, and which may have been for the sanctus bell-rope. The hole appears to go up as far as the coping.

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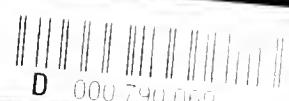


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